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Memoirs of
Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha

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MEMOIRS OF ERNEST II

Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha

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Memoirs of
Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha

CHAPTER I

NAPOLEON'S 'LE PAPE ET LE CONGRÈS.'—LETTER FROM KING LEOPOLD.—THE DUKE'S REPLY.—THE INTENTIONS OF THE FRENCH EMPEROR.—AUSTRIA AND FRANCE.—LOUIS NAPOLEON'S SCHEME OF ANNEXING SAVOY.—SUPPORTED BY ENGLAND.—PRINCE ALBERT'S DISAPPROBATION.—APPREHENDED RUPTURE BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PRINCE ALBERT AND THE PRINCE REGENT OF PRUSSIA.—NAPOLEON AND THE GERMAN REFUGEES IN LONDON.—THE DUKE IN BERLIN.—HIS REPORT TO PRINCE ALBERT.—THE KING OF BELGIUM ON THE SITUATION.—NAPOLEON'S GERMAN FRIENDS.—WAR-LIKE FEELING IN ENGLAND.

THE year 1859 ended under the effect of a treaty of peace which scarcely has its equal in modern history. Diplomacy of a not very conscientious kind had brought about a treaty in Zurich, in which every single statute stood in direct contradiction, both to the facts then already accomplished, and to the intentions of most of the Powers. It was as if the world were to be officially persuaded, that, what had hitherto been understood by the venerable name of international right, was now nothing more than a juggling trick of the autocrat on the Seine. In order in some measure to gloss over the falsity of the settlements of the peace of Zurich, the solution of the Italian question was reserved for a universal European Congress, to which Austria and France jointly were to summon the Great Powers. As to the time for this Congress, however, no agreement could be arrived at.

In the mean time, Napoleon, before the New Year 1860, surprised the Powers, who were waiting for the invitation to the Congress, with the now famous pamphlet, 'The Pope and the Congress.' In this pamphlet, the necessity of the existence of the Ecclesiastical States for the safety of the Catholic Church and her Supreme Head was for the first time disputed, and the intention manifested of restricting the Pope's temporal possessions to Rome.

In political circles in England and Germany, men beheld in this new Napoleonic declaration chiefly a proof, that the temple of Janus was not yet looked upon as closed in Paris, and, in the reigning Houses, the unpleasant effect of this fresh disquietude was everywhere very keenly felt. Public sentiment was perhaps most pertinently expressed in a letter from my uncle to myself, which afforded at the same time an exceedingly characteristic picture of his own manner of thinking.

'My Dear Earnest,—Everything is in a state of considerable suspense. The pamphlet *Le Pape et le Congrès* is not to be explained by any rational policy, and can only act as an *embarras*, even on a servile Congress. These strange publications have hitherto done nothing but *considerably* damage Louis Napoleon and affairs in general, and still he always reverts to them again. The funds have fallen, and business is at a standstill, which they are surely not pleased to see in France. The principal thing is to avoid great wars as long as possible, and, in face of the little ability that has hitherto been shown, to trust to Fate, which sometimes does not manage matters so badly after all. As to Germany, it is to be desired that they should not always occupy themselves solely with squabbling. Unless they show a good front, in the French sense of the term, I believe the Germans will get a most formidable thrashing. It is better they should avoid everything just now, and show themselves pretty submissive.

'I hope these lines will find you well and contented. I live here in great solitude, as the young people are in town,

where I am not fond of living. Soliciting the continuance of your true friendship, I remain, with sincere love, etc.,

'LEOPOLD.'

I answered my uncle with a few variations on the theme which he had struck, but I thought it well to point out the consequences of the existing circumstances of Europe with a little less reserve.

'. . . . I quite agree, that politics, according to the old forms, sensible in their motives and logical in their conclusions, are not the politics that are dished up to us from the Tuileries. We have an antique tyrant before us, educated by life itself, and full of a host of cosmopolitical views of the 19th century, who has a power at his command, such as probably no ruler in Europe has ever had; in so absolute a form, indeed, not even his uncle.

'Opposite to him stands old Europe, dilapidated, and shaken to its very foundation; in England, no crown-government, nor, properly speaking, any democratic government; in Vienna, they are endeavouring to hold the spirit of the times by the legs; in Russia, we see great reforms begun, without their knowing, either there or anywhere else, where they are leading to; in Prussia, an immense deal of good will, but no fixed principle, and lack of insight and energy; the rest of Germany disunited and divided, both on the thrones, and amongst the people. Your counsel is therefore not of the worst. We may do well to be pretty submissive.

'The occasion for a fresh great war is not wanting, but the general weakness of the other States renders it impossible for the time being. A closer union between Prussia and Austria is, under the prevailing circumstances, just as impossible as an official rupture. That which is requisite for either of those two contingencies, is just what is lacking in both quarters. Thus they squabble and pinch one another on the quiet, whilst Napoleon calmly distributes countries, and, under pretence of the strangest motives, sets himself the task of effecting the regeneration of the sick European body, according to his own pleasure. Manifestoes, pamphlets, and

newspaper articles, are then made to surprise his own Ministers, as well as Europe, and proclaim whatever is deemed fit in the brain of the only all-powerful ruler. I always come back again to what I have so often said: If it is impossible, or not intended, to overthrow this man and his firmly centralised Empire, the wisest thing that can be done, is to go along with him.

'I will not weary you with the squabbles in the Diet in Frankfort, or, in other words, with specially Prussian or Hanoverian affairs. We can neither of us do, or alter, anything in the matter, and to occupy oneself with it as an amusement, would be more than can be expected.

'ERNEST.

'GOTHA, *January* 23, 1860.'

In the meantime, people had become more and more enlightened as to the actual intentions of the French Emperor. From the discussion of the great matters of principle, the real kernel of the question, which was to end in the aggrandisement of France, gradually detached itself. This practical side of the literary diplomatic action of the Emperor had been first perceived and recognised in Parisian financial circles. It was written to me, first as a surmise, but soon afterwards as a positive fact, that the whole thunderstorm which had been raised against the Pope, had merely pursued the object of rendering the Congress agreed to in the peace of Zurich impossible, and bringing about the annexation of Nice and Savoy by means of a special arrangement with Italy. Napoleon, while declaring himself against the restorations in Central Italy, gave himself the appearance of yielding to English policy. Wishing to maintain Austria in possession of Venice, he referred Piedmont to the possession of Central Italy, and at the same time bestowed on his Frenchmen the first 'rectification of the frontier.' 'All good things,' an acquaintance wrote to me from Paris, 'must have a beginning. What would the Congress have said to this?'

Since, in the army, the class of 1853 had not been dismissed at New Year, the public and the Stock Exchange thought it

would be impossible to carry out Napoleon's new plan without a war, and people were uneasy and full of discontent. Nor were symptoms lacking, that the revolutionary propaganda in London and in Switzerland considered the moment arrived for striking a fresh blow at old Europe. It was only uncertain, whether the activity of the emigrants would be directed more against Austria and Germany, or against the States of the Church and Naples.

In Austria, men built their hopes in great part upon the effects which Napoleon's revolutionary policy was beginning to exercise on the great Northern Courts. It was thought, that the Prince Regent of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia could no longer shut their eyes to the fact, that a coalition of peaceful and monarchic Europe was becoming indispensable. Despatches from Vienna assured me, that, whilst the Foreign Office was still engaged in petty squabbles with the Prussian Cabinet on questions of German reform, efforts were already being made there to bring about an understanding from Court to Court in the sense of a conservative policy.

Hermann Orges, who was now allowed to appear again in Berlin for the first time since 1848, had not been unfavourably received at the Prussian Court, and had also examined the ground in Russia. He was received in Vienna by the Emperor of Austria, and declared, in reports which he sent to me through Herr von Meyern, that, in the highest quarters, he had everywhere met with the desire of re-establishing the old alliances against France. Both in Berlin and in Vienna, in spite of all domestic German differences, they were extremely oppressed by the painful feeling of weakness and isolation towards the powerful man on the Seine, and longed with hidden sorrow for a return of the times of the Emperor Francis and King Frederick William III.

Outwardly, Austria had endeavoured, as best she could, to restore her old relations to the French Empire, and she found in Prince Metternich a personage excellently qualified for this purpose. Owing to his prepossessing appearance, Metternich was treated with the greatest distinction at the Court of the Tuileries, to the surprise of many a less fortunate diplomate.

In January, meanwhile, the restless Emperor of the French had again started a new scheme, which caused Austria great annoyance, and proved only too plainly, that, between the State views of the modern Cæsar and the old monarchies, there was not the very faintest chance of an agreement. It was suggested, that Austria should sell Venice to Italy, a notion which, to a great legitimate dynasty, could only appear repulsive and dishonourable. Thus the matter was at first looked upon as a manœuvre for the purpose of sowing discord. But, on the 30th of January, I received the most positive assurance from Paris, that the pamphlet *L' Affranchissement de la Vénétie* was appearing under the same auspices as *Le Pape et le Congrès*, and that the same official importance might be attached to this new work: *La nouvelle déjà annoncée au sujet de la cession de la Vénétie par l'Autriche, moyennant une indemnité pécuniaire, circule de nouveau avec une certaine persistance.*

I had assured my friends in Paris at the outset, that Austria would never on any consideration enter into a bargain of such a description, and the events of the following years confirmed my views only too well. However, the most painful oppression experienced by Austrian policy in the beginning of the year 1860, consisted in the fact, that it was the English Cabinet which favoured the new phase of the reformation of Italian affairs with an openness that might almost be termed offensive. By his sudden wheeling round to the system of Free Trade, the Emperor of the French had strengthened Lord Palmerston's unstable popularity. The noble Lord returned this service by the most inconsiderate proposals with regard to the adjustment of the Italian difficulties. In a despatch of the 14th January, the English Cabinet recommended, simultaneously in Vienna, Paris, and Turin, four points, of which each single one seemed designed to further and vindicate Louis Napoleon's schemes of annexing Savoy.

'1. Adherence to the principle of non-intervention. 2. Withdrawal of all foreign troops from Italy. 3. Non-interference with the free disposition of the Central Italian States,

in reference to the choice of their Government, in such wise, that also their annexation by Sardinia shall not be prevented, if the populations desire it. 4. Total abandonment of the confederation projected in the former stipulations of peace, and, more particularly, the leaving out of Venice from all political connection with the other Italian States.' Austria officially declared her assent to points 2 and 4, but observed *ad* 4, that she adhered to the stipulations of Villafranca and Zurich.

Such a rejection could naturally only have been successful, if Austria had found allies in Prussia and Russia against the French, English, and Italian, tendencies. But, with all their endeavours to arrive at an understanding over the heads of the Diplomates and Ministers, the monarchs personally had not advanced one step. They gave one another mutual assurances of their goodwill, and of their desire to check the intolerable subversion of Europe. But, in point of fact, they either did not dare, or they were unable, to find means of preventing it, and all correspondences in high quarters remained harmonies of the spheres, which failed to reach the practical world.

In England, where my brother was by no means edified with the tricks of Palmerston's Cabinet policy, the idea of a Congress could find no defender, because it was well known that the Pope had agreed with Austria on a scheme, by which the old reactionary state of affairs would have been maintained in the shape of a confederation.

My brother wrote, in November 1859, in a very irritable tone about Palmerston's policy: 'We are passing most of our time in being annoyed, and in carrying on an exceedingly unpleasant paper-war with the Prime Minister and the Foreign one, who are making *cause commune* for the purpose of rekindling the war of independence in Italy, and obliging France to break her word to Austria, and stirring up rows of every possible description. Their means of doing things underhand, which they cannot carry through in public, are endless, and hardly is the one laid hold of, when the other escapes again. This makes me uneasy for Germany too,

for the sentiments and actions of these two people are quite those of 1848-50: Liberty and nationality for Italy, Hungary, Poland, Greece, etc., *none* for Holstein and Germany. Austria turned out of Italy, to be stronger in Germany. Intimacy with L. N. Maintenance of despotism in France, etc.'

A few weeks later, however, my brother was entirely pitched over into the other camp, in consequence of the news he had received, concerning the plans which the Pope, in conjunction with Austria, was said to have devised regarding the Italian confederation. 'The political horizon,' he wrote on the 30th of December, 'has no pleasant aspect. We have just heard of the programme for the Congress, as arranged between the Pope and Austria: Recognition of the rights of the Dukes; their reinstallation by violent means, if the people do not submit; Italian confederation, on the model of the German one; Naples, Rome, and Sardinia, with three votes each; Austria and Tuscany with two, Parma and Modena with one. This would give Austria aud the Pope twelve votes against the three Sardinian ones. Introduction of uniform constitutions, after the pattern of the present French constitution, in which Sardinia will have to acquiesce. Nonsense cannot be driven to a greater pitch. England's indignation would lead her to an armed opposition, conjointly with France; an exceedingly dangerous step for Germany! Take the pamphlet *Le Pape et le Congrès*, which has met, universally, with the greatest approbation here, but has thrown the whole fraternity of priests in France into the most fearful commotion. *Confusione grande*, say the Italians, and under such circumstances people are to hope for a happy new year! The best part of hoping is always, that it can do no harm.'

It was questionable whether these accounts, which, as is evident from the foregoing letter, had caused dissatisfaction in England, were genuine, or whether they had come from the Franco-Sardinian camp, for the purpose of troubling the waters. In any case, the fact of the Congress idea having been dropped, and Louis Napoleon's evident hankering after annexation, had caused my brother to bring harsh accusations

against Palmerston. Nothing could offend his moral views of the world in matters of politics more painfully, than the experience that it was possible in our days to carry on an illegal traffic with countries, such as had been considered reprehensible in the preceding century. Albert did not hesitate to express, in the severest terms, his condemnation of the French Empire's inordinate desire for aggrandisement: 'Morally, it makes every honest man suffer, to witness the apparent triumph of knavery. France is again profiting in every possible way by Palmerston's friendship and his little colleague's sentimental hopes of once more illustrating the name of Russell by contending in the year 1860 for the principles of 1688, forgetting the while, that an analogy of circumstances would be the primary condition of success.

'The material is immense, which the Emperor possesses in his unlimited power, his carbonarism, his popular origin, his Napoleonic name, in his knowledge of the foibles of his people, in his enormous army, in his inexhaustible pecuniary means, in his elastic conscience, and in his exclusive control of the Press in France.'

When Prince Albert wrote these words, the Emperor's annexation scheme had already gained a considerable start of all other proposals for the solution of Central Italian affairs. Lord Russell, it is true, still denied Napoleon's tendencies in the English Parliament at the end of February. He declared, that he could rely on the Emperor's wisdom to prevent the incorporation of the territories on the southern frontier, the more so, as such an incorporation would, in his opinion, not strengthen, but weaken, France. However, on the 2nd of March, Cavour provisionally declared his unreserved consent to the cession of Savoy and Nice, in a Note to the Sardinian Ambassador in Paris. Immediately afterwards, the plebiscite followed in Tuscany and in the Emilia, which, by an enormous majority, awarded the possession of these countries to Sardinia.

Meanwhile, the Emperor had a difficulty, little noticed at the time, to overcome in Paris, the conflicting tendencies in his family having been considerably aggravated by the new

solution of the Italian question. The dissatisfaction of Prince Napoleon and his wife, when no throne offered itself for the younger branch of the Bonapartes, was not slight. Was the imitation of the first Empire only to result to the advantage of the Imperial cousin and his progeny, and not also to that of the other Bonapartes?

In face of these dissensions in the family, the hard words which had just fallen against the Emperor of the French in the English Parliament, on the occasion of the debate on the treaty of commerce, produced a doubly painful impression in the Tuileries, and it came to a public scene at a Court festival between Louis Napoleon and Lord Cowley. As the Russian Ambassador had heard the angry conversation, timid minds in various European Cabinets looked upon a complete rupture between France and England, on account of the Savoy question, as imminent.

The incidents referred to, are now well-known from Cowley's own despatches, which have been published in the Life of the Prince Consort. It should be added, however, that Napoleon was at the time ailing in health, and had, but a short time before, got over a severe attack of his illness, which had been carefully concealed from the public.

The apprehended rupture between France and England, however, proved all the less serious, as Austria now suddenly showed herself more favourably inclined towards Napoleon's plan of annexation, and even smoothed the way for the Emperor with Sardinia. Russia had likewise no objection to France's aggrandisement, hence Prussia alone was left in the awkward position of having to regard the utterances of the French newspapers on the 'establishment of the natural frontier' as a menace against her own territory.

They tried in Berlin to derive some encouragement from the personal exchange of opinions between the Prince Regent and my brother. But nothing was stranger than the differences which immediately appeared between the views of England and those of Prussia. In all things for which Prussia evinced sympathy, England showed antipathy, and *vice versa*. Only the furious language against the person of

the French autocrat, mixed with an equal dose of apprehensions, constituted a point of union in the correspondence between my brother and the Prince Regent.

This correspondence has now been made public by Queen Victoria. When it came to my knowledge at the time, I could not help feeling that the whole dispute was about a mere chimera. For, in everything that was favourable to the unity of Italy and the annexation of Sardinia, the English Court indulged in the most extravagant sentiments, and, in everything that implied injury to Austria, and infringed legitimate rights, the Prince Regent evinced discontent. My brother was just as hostile to the 'incorrigible rule of the Austrians,' as he termed it, as the Prince Regent was inclined to combat the revolution everywhere by the same means. They were both very angry with Napoleon, but the one wanted him delivered up to judgment, because he had been a promoter of the revolution, and the other regretted that he was sullying the laurels of the champion of liberty by the taint of annexation.

That an understanding could not signify very much, where the parties were so little agreed as to the motives and ends of the stern and rapidly progressing facts, was manifest. Even had it not been Lord Palmerston who at that moment conducted the Government of England, it would still have proved impossible for an alliance to be formed between these two Powers, who appeared inclined to rise up in threatening opposition to the French seizure of Nice and Savoy. Hence, the Powers were ultimately content, when the French Minister Thouvenel, in his Circular Despatch on the annexation, at least assured Europe, that this annexation had by no means taken place on account of the natural frontier principle, or on account of the nationality of the people, but was mainly to be regarded as an improvement of the international law, which the treaties of 1814 had interpreted so very unfavourably for France.

At last, when everything was over, and it had been proved once more, how little all political discussions signify, without an energetic determination and will on the part of the ruling powers, my brother, too, consoled himself with calmer reflec-

tions, which he clothed in the following words: 'I believe—on comparing everything I hear—that I now know the situation exactly. But I also know its helplessness! Such helplessness always ensues, where the personal element outweighs the actual matter. Common sense, principles, and courage, are a match for actual difficulties; persons, as Christ tells Nicodemus, would have to be born again, to become different from what they are!'

In the meantime, I, for my part, had had several conversations with an intimate friend, who was the English Consul accredited to one of the German States, and had induced him to make a report, in which the condition of South Germany, the uneasiness and exasperation of patriotic Germans, and the hopes and wishes which were entertained on this side, were, in some measure at least, to be brought to the knowledge of the English Cabinet. Towards the end of February, he read his work to me in Gotha, and soon after forwarded it to England.

The Consul's report made Lord Russell so uneasy, that he saw himself induced to ask my brother's opinion in the matter. Prince Albert could not help entirely confirming everything Russell's English informant had observed in Germany, in consequence of which the English Cabinet felt itself impelled to exhibit, outwardly at least, a little more moderation in its Napoleonic sympathies. Seeing the great dissatisfaction which the annexation of Savoy caused among the greater part of the English public, Lord Palmerston had every reason to show reserve towards France. This did not prevent him, however, from continuing, on his own account, to vigorously support the further emancipation of Italy with the aid of the revolution in Sicily and Naples.

Nor could the English Cabinet altogether ignore the fact, that the Emperor of the French had at this moment begun to study the German question just as seriously as Lord Palmerston was studying the Neapolitan one. Louis Napoleon was just then having all manner of relations established with the German refugees in London, as to which I was kept well informed. A portion of our emigrants determined to accept

French protection, after the pattern of Italy, and to support the plans of the Emperor. Kinkel, in particular, had taken up Napoleon's defence, and endeavoured to induce Marx, Blind, and Juch, to use their influence to the same effect.

The periodical 'Hermann' was to be made serviceable to this French tendency. But ultimately these groups entered after all upon a more German course, and, in a letter which Juch wrote from London, on the 4th of March, to one of my friends, it was said: 'Kinkel, too, will be ours again in a short time.' 'Kinkel is a noble, generous nature,' the letter went on to say, 'although appearances are for the moment against him. Only the slow progress of the national party, and the timid, miserable bearing of the Prussian Chambers, caused him to look to the impetus which Napoleon, after liberating Italy, intended to give to our Germany, for the help which we ought to seek in the bosom of our native country.'

The French party was thus unable to gain a firm footing among the German refugees in London. K. Blind opposed Vogt in an open statement, in which he declined to have anything to do with Napoleonic ideas, declaring them to be incompatible with the tendencies of German democracy. Kinkel soon returned from the false path into which he had entered; the 'Hermann' maintained a tendency which was, on the whole, moderate, and remained decidedly anti-French, which was the principal thing.

Since everything that took place among the refugees in London, always reacted very strongly on numerous people in Germany, it could be regarded as a success in the good German sense, that the cosmopolitical revolutionary tendencies which the Poles and Hungarians, and more particularly Klapka, had been wanting to ingraft into the German colony in the course of the last few months, were firmly rejected. It was Freiligrath and Blind especially, who, according to Juch's assurance at an international assembly in March, had managed to effect the emancipation of the better half of German democracy from the seductive artifices of Napoleon.

Whether the endeavours of the French Government to gain influence on the democratic party in Germany through

the refugees, were sufficiently known in Berlin, it is difficult for me to say. The only thing that is certain, is, that little distinction was made between the strong shades of the party which, at home or abroad, appeared to be fighting against the existing state of affairs in Germany.

The one who had to suffer most from the discontent that had arisen respecting the situation, was the President of the Ministry in Berlin, who became, in a manner, the scapegoat of the dangerous doings of the different German parties. The Prince of Hohenzollern's position had grown no better since New Year, but was being undermined on all sides. It was not to the non-success of Herr von Schleinitz's foreign policy, that the Prince Regent was inclined to ascribe the growing discontent in Prussia. He rather thought that, in the pliancy of the Prince of Hohenzollern towards the liberal excrescences of the time, he beheld a serious danger to the Prussian power.

A short time ago, the Prince Regent had addressed the direct question to me, as to what practical measures could be adopted in Germany. I had elected to answer verbally, rather than by letter. Since that time Prince Hohenzollern had had more and more to complain of, and regarded a visit on my part to the Prussian Court as not unseasonable. I therefore repaired to Berlin on the 11th of March, and stayed there, with a short interruption from the 18th to 21st, when my presence in Gotha was required, until the 30th of the same month.

Immediately after my return, I made a report to my brother, from which the reader will at once gain a general idea of the state of affairs and the extent of my activity in the Prussian capital.

'GOTHA, *March* 31, 1860.

'DEAR ALBERT,—Having returned yesterday from Berlin, it shall be my first task to send you a rather detailed report on our Home and Foreign affairs, as they presented themselves to my view in Berlin, in order, on the one hand, to enable you to form a correct judgment of the actions proceeding from there, and, on the other hand, to complete your own records.

'The faulty policy of last year, and the fact that the Regent has gradually let himself be lured from the right path into which he had entered, by counsellors who favour Franco-Italian views, are the natural causes of the present difficulties. I therefore took the liberty of drawing attention to what would come, and how it would come. In my last letter, I again pointed out the want of method which characterises the Prussian Foreign Office. The state of affairs has since grown no better. Schleinitz urged the 'Holy Alliance,' because his sole object is always merely to extricate himself from the difficulties of the moment, and because, *grâce à lui*, Prussia is completely isolated.

'What was bound to occur, took place. Russia politely, but firmly, declined. Austria just as firmly, but more offensively.

'Neither of these facts are known to the public, so I beg you only to make very discreet use of them.

'The Prince Regent permitted these steps, without desiring them, since he foresaw their uselessness. Your excellent parable of last year is in point again now, viz.: Robert between Alice and Bertram. He has himself deprived his Ministry of the possibility of acting energetically and systematically, by the way he has organised and composed it.

'With regard to France, they are mightily uneasy in Berlin. They agree with me, that the mania of regulating frontiers may now soon be applied to ourselves, and, notwithstanding, they are afraid to employ energetic language in the annexation question. The example of little Switzerland might have served them as a pattern.

'In the Hessian question, they said A, and permitted Austria and the Middle States to behave very uncourteously towards Prussia. But Schleinitz shrinks from saying B. We may live to see a second Olmütz any day. In this question, too, the Prince *thinks* quite correctly, and expresses himself excellently. But he does not give us the slightest guarantee, that he will not act differently.

'This condition of affairs has shaken the whole State also internally. They have not managed to preserve the excellent

feeling of last year. The minds of the masses are filled with anger and distrust. The red spectre disturbs the Prince's dreams. The military question has, so to speak, put everything in question.

'In this matter, the Prince takes up the position of a commanding monarch towards his chambers. Unfortunately, the chambers take up the same standpoint as the Coburg Diet. They are tactless, shortsighted, and possessed by the mania of participating in the government down to the very smallest details. On both sides, the most preposterous mistakes are being committed every day. Of a really constitutional life, there is hardly a vestige to be found.

'In spite of all this misery, Prussia's game must not be given up for lost. All complaints are fruitless; one must act. My principle and my views on the subject remain the same. Prussia can only have one ally, the national idea. . . . . Napoleonic policy will only be fatal to Germany, if it is able to appear, like in Italy, as the liberator and the saviour.

'In reference to Austria, I have already expressed my views to you. I have preached them openly in Berlin, too, and have nowhere met with any refutation. Even the Prince perfectly agreed with me.

'The German question is as good as decided. No resolution of the Confederation has any binding power, if it is to be the means of trampling German rights under foot. The policy of the Rhenish Confederation is up to the present still a chimera, so far as the population is concerned.

'Amidst the wild turmoil of the capital, our dear Vicky's house forms an oasis, and I seek every day in her society the recreation and distraction which one stands so much in need of in Berlin. . . . .

'YOUR FAITHFUL BROTHER.'

Even my uncle in Brussels, who could hardly be accused of pursuing any very progressive tendency, accompanied my accounts of German affairs with the expression of great anxiety, and severe condemnation of all the half measures which were being employed in Berlin.

'Accept my best thanks,' he wrote on the 16th of April, 1860, 'for your kind letter and the copies of the reports forwarded to Albert.

'It is a sad outlook in poor old Germany. Passions, and not interests, are everywhere becoming the rulers of men. The right moment for Austria to approach Prussia, was when the Prince assumed the Regency. The outlook is now sad enough, and it can only be hoped and desired, that my neighbour will, in his own interest, proceed a little more slowly. A furious warrior he is not; he will therefore be inclined to attain his ends by milder means, such as, for instance, the violent *desire* of the nation to be *incorporated*. It appears that a German newspaper in Strasbourg has the mission to pave the way to this end. As for ourselves, we must rely upon what we have. Our existence is really positively guaranteed. An attack upon us would, after all, be a great responsibility for the four Powers, especially if we *were not to give ourselves up*.

'Although it is pretty hopeless, there is nothing left, in the contingency of an attack on the Rhine, but for the whole confederation of States to hold together. In Prussia there seem to be politicians, who would be inclined to sell a portion of their German brothers, in order to acquire, at the cost of other States, unlawful property on the right bank of the Rhine. The year 1806 confronts us again in plain letters. Hanover they then had already. To make Prussia powerful, cannot possibly be French policy, and, instead of aggrandising Prussia, victorious France would aim at *doing away* with her altogether. Up to the present, constitutional Prussia has not shown herself very German. I believe, had the poor King remained in good health, he would have supported Austria. Either a nation *is*, or it deserves *not to be*. The Frenchman lets himself be shot *pour la gloire de la France*; the German investigates the case, whilst he ought to have hit out.

'I do not deny that *finalement* I am growing callous from sheer disgust. And now farewell, etc.'

It will strangely impress the present reader of the foregoing letter, that my uncle should have considered it possible,

that single parts of Germany could at last determine to manifest French sympathies, or even listen to and understand Napoleon's allurements. I must therefore recall the fact, that, in the Western parts of Germany, this danger was actually much greater than one would be inclined to believe at the present day. The democratised Palatinate, which listened to the suggestions of the *Pfälzer Courier*, was by no means very far from expressing the desire for incorporation mentioned, by way of example, by my uncle. I will subjoin here, from the records of the Nationalverein, a report on the state of feeling which seems to convey enough to render those times intelligible.

'The state of affairs in the Palatinate requires particular notice,' wrote a thoroughly reliable, calm observer, Fries, who was equipped with every possible means of ascertaining the truth. 'I did not anticipate anything very satisfactory. The lukewarm feeling, however, such as I have found it, has surprised me, notwithstanding. According to all accounts, there is no doubt there, that an energetic foreign policy on Prussia's part would awaken sympathy; but the people resign themselves with great calmness and composure to the thought, that matters may very well assume a different shape. It is true, there is no French party in the Palatinate, because they have hitherto been afraid that the French menage may prove too expensive. But, as to any German national feelings stirring against it, there is not a vestige of such a thing to be found. If French rule comes, they will accept it, and I believe that no great art would be necessary, to attain polling results in the Palatinate, such as only the greatest technical skill was able to produce in Savoy. How favourable this soil is for Napoleonic machinations, is evident. I will only mention a small, but very significant, fact. The editor . . . ., who last year joined the Eisenach programme, has refused, under all sorts of nugatory pretences, to insert in his paper the declaration on the Savoy questions, which was resolved upon by the Committee of the Nationalverein in Berlin. The Press is preparing for French rule.'

In harmony with this information, was another report,

which said that, in the Rhine districts, people were growing more and more persistent in the belief that Prussia had no intention of defending the West of Germany. A journalist like Hermann Orges could dare to address the question to me through Herr von Meyern, whether I, by virtue of my personal experiences, did not entertain the conviction that the Prince Regent would himself be willing to cede territory on the French frontier.

Two crowned heads, so Orges declared—and he had quite recently had an audience with the King of Bavaria—had premised their remarks to him by the question: 'Do you really believe that Prussia will defend the Rhine provinces?'

The reader will see, therefore, that my uncle was well informed, when he based his hopes chiefly on the fact that the third Napoleon was not exactly a 'furious warrior.'

In May 1860, the confusion and uncertainty in all European affairs had reached a pitch, such as could only be desired in the Tuileries. In England, the war-like current still kept on the surface for a little time, and the Government commenced immense preparations, on land and at sea. Thousands of volunteers once more flocked to the English flags, a fact, which my brother enlarges upon with a sort of enthusiasm in all his letters written at that time. It came to passionate encounters, threats, and recriminations, between the French and the English diplomates, and the language which was now heard from the lips of Lord Russell, satisfied my brother, as it had not done for a long time.

I could ascribe some merit in all this to an English diplomatist of my acquaintance, to whom I had communicated the reports on the dangers in the Palatinate, of which I have just spoken. These disclosures produced an electrifying effect in the English Cabinet. John Bull suddenly saw the whole history of Charles and James II rise up before his mind's eye: The predatory wars in the Palatinate; the castle of Heidelberg; the Dutch coast; all this was a threatening warning, and England prepared for action—whilst Garibaldi conquered Sicily and Naples, under the protection of her fleets

CHAPTER II

THE PRINCE OF WALES IN COBURG.—PRINCE ALBERT ON THE GERMAN NATIONALVEREIN.—LOUIS NAPOLEON'S PLAN OF A MEETING WITH THE PRINCE REGENT OF PRUSSIA.—THE DUKE'S ADVICE.—INDECISION IN BERLIN.—THE PRINCE REGENT'S CONDITIONS.—EFFECT OF THE NEWS ON KING GEORGE V. OF HANOVER.—THE DUKE DETERMINES TO BE PRESENT AT THE INTERVIEW.—THE EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH AND THE GERMAN SOVEREIGNS IN BADEN-BADEN.—CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE EMPEROR AND THE DUKE.—THE EMPEROR'S VIEWS.—HIS FEAR OF A COALITION.—THE DUKE IN LONDON.—HIS OPINION OF THE ENGLISH VOLUNTEERS.—PRINCE ALBERT'S DISSATISFACTION WITH PRUSSIA.—EFFECT OF THE DUKE'S JOURNEY TO LONDON IN BERLIN.—INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA AND THE PRINCE REGENT IN TEPLITZ.—ACCOUNTS OF ITS RESULT FROM COMPETENT SOURCES.—THE KING OF BELGIUM'S SUMMARY OF THE DIPLOMATIC SITUATION.

Upon the hot summer of the year 1859, there followed a remarkably severe winter, and a raw and stormy spring. It was as if the weather meant to vie with politics in giving life a sad and distressing aspect. I had received intimation from my brother, that the Prince of Wales would pay me a visit in the middle of April. But our Thuringian land obstinately refused to don its spring attire, and raw winter winds still swept over the hills of the dear old country. The vigorous and promising young Heir-apparent of the great Kingdom was only to see the land of his fathers enveloped in obscure mists and a white robe of snow, such as it had appeared to the ancient Romans, a dark and raw corner of the globe, where a hardened people defied an everlasting winter. And I should so much have liked to imbue the youthful spirit of the Prince, now growing to man's estate, with pleasant and affectionate impressions of our German fatherland, which was

still so little able to meet with love and sympathy from the kindred race across the channel!

The Prince of Wales arrived in Gotha on the 12th of April, and, as may be easily conceived, every effort was made on all sides to produce pleasant impressions upon him. The country and its population endeavoured to prove how proud they were to be able to look upon the grown-up heir to the most powerful Kingdom in a manner like one of themselves. In the audience chamber and the ball-room, there was no end to the delight, when my brother's son presented himself for the first time to his father's countrymen. A few pleasant days spent in Gotha, and almost as many in Coburg, then created the impression, as if the house, much as it might be divided and scattered, was after all inwardly united by a certain uniformity of sentiments. Our relatives from Austria were also present, and, to prevent the political life in the little Duchies from appearing too insignificant to the young Prince, chance fortunately provided, that a grand assembly of the Committee of the Nationalverein should just then be sitting in Gotha.

I conferred, on the 15th of April, until late at night with the gentlemen of the Society. They were of opinion, that the conflict between Switzerland and France on the subject of Chablais and Faucigny was a good opportunity to manifest publicly the harmony which prevailed between the ends of the Nationalverein and the Prussian Government. Most of the members of the Committee expected the Prince Regent to declare himself in favour of the European treaties against Napoleon, and they hoped to give a general expression to the popular feeling in Germany by letting the Nationalverein espouse the cause of Switzerland. However, I could not conceal the fact from the gentlemen of the Nationalverein, that they were mistaken as to the intention of the Prussian Government in this respect, and that it would certainly not consider the Savoy difficulty a suitable occasion for abandoning its attitude of reserve.

The Society had, at this time, better results to show in respect to its literary activity. The first number of the

Weekly Gazette of the Nationalverein had just then been issued, which the Prince of Wales, when he left Coburg on the 19th of April, was to take home to my brother.

Prince Albert was greatly pleased with this communication, and answered upon it with the often reiterated remark, that the corruption of the Press, which Napoleon was systematically working at in Germany and England, could only be checked by the opposition of independent national organs. The English Court was just then greatly incensed against the Emperor of the French, because the latter, owing to an indiscretion which could be traced to an inexcusable piece of carelessness, had managed to gain possession of a correspondence that had passed between Prince Albert and the Prince Regent.

Personal and material motives thus combined more and more to give the Emperor of the French the feeling of great isolation. The European situation became still more complicated, when, on the 5th of May, Prince Gortschakoff in St Petersburg convoked the representatives of the Great Powers, and recommended them to discuss the position of the Christians in Turkey. This created the impression, as if the Eastern question was once more to be unfolded, for the Russian Press did not delay to point out the necessity of revising the treaties of 1856. It might have been expected, that England would thereby be compelled to come to terms with Prussia and Austria. The only drawback was, that the official policy in Berlin was almost entirely at variance with the wishes which the Prince Regent personally may be supposed to have entertained with regard to an alliance with England and Austria.

Under these circumstances, the Emperor of the French was easily led to the idea, that a meeting between him and the Prince Regent would be the most effective means of dispelling the existing dangers, or, at least, the belief of the French public in a threatening coalition. The more the Triple Alliance was feared in France, the more carefully did Louis Napoleon avoid appearing as if he stood on a bad footing with Prussia. About the beginning of April,

therefore, he made manifold attempts to induce the Prince Regent to consent to a personal meeting, at which, as he suggested, all pending misunderstandings could easily be removed. However, the Prince Regent turned a deaf ear to such seductive offers, so that the rumours which had arisen, soon lapsed into silence again.

Meanwhile, I had ascertained in the month of May, that Pourtalès advocated Louis Napoleon's plan. I therefore gave instructions to one of my acquaintances, to gather information on this important subject. In a playful letter of the 18th of May, I considered it quite opportune to treat the Government circles in Berlin to a few pessimistic prophecies regarding the intended interview, and, since the world has even subsequently been left in the dark as to the origin of the matter, some value may be attached to my accounts of a period, in which all negotiations on this subject between Prussia and France were kept strictly secret.

'If Duncker,' I wrote to my friend, 'has told you, that there is no news of any consequence to be reported, he is either an arch-rogue, or he really knows nothing. I have reason to believe one thing or the other. There is certainly something of the greatest importance going on, and just in the highest quarter.

'The plan of a meeting between the Prince and the Emperor Napoleon, incredible as it appeared to me, is no newspaper hoax.

'Prince Hohenzollern is either keeping silent, or he has allowed himself to be caught by Pourtalès. Tell Duncker, he is to let me know the plain truth of the matter, or, if he should really know nothing, he may ask the Prince about it in my name.

'The affair is of the highest importance. If the Prince Regent is really to meet the dangerous man, an exact programme must be drafted, on the basis of which matters may be discussed. There can be no idea of approaching the French Emperor without some decided plan. People deceive themselves, if they think this meeting would be merely a conventional visit of courtesy. The Emperor Napoleon will begin

at once with the political situation, and propound his theory of the regulation of the map.

'Hence, if the interview is to take place, there must be no uncertainty as to whether it is to lead to a real rupture, or to an alliance. It will hardly prove possible to elude the Emperor with empty phrases.

'The bell is already ringing on the stage, and the curtain will soon go up. The Eastern Question, and, by its means, the Rhine Question, is set in motion.

'During the summer and autumn, the diplomatic skirmishes will be carried on; in the winter, the preparations for war will be made; and in the spring, the *evènements* in the East will commence. Prussia must therefore decide, whether she means to share the great spoil with France and Russia, or take up the titanic struggle against the two Emperors with England and Austria, who, in that case, will *nolens volens* have to enter into an alliance.

'The later the resolution is taken, the greater the danger. This interview must ripen it. All this, my good friend, frame in fair words, and expound it to Duncker, or to the Prince himself. You have an opportunity of displaying your diplomatic talent.'

The following day, my friend was in a position to report a few facts.

'The invitation to the meeting was given under the pretence of pacifying people's minds in Germany. It was replied, it is said, in evasive terms: that the uneasiness was not only produced by apprehensions of an aggressive attack on the part of the French, but also by the fear, that single German Powers would unite with France. Until they were safe from this suspicion in Germany, it was impossible to proceed to an interview.

'As to this latter point, the idea was, that Prussia would on no account agree to a meeting, before an understanding had been arrived at between all the German governments at a Congress. However, since yesterday, the idea of a meeting has been given up altogether. The firm resolution now prevails to avoid it, and to unite, in the event of a general conflict, with Austria and England.

'Duncker builds great hopes on the mediation of Your Highness in England. If Your Highness should intend to come here first, this should not be done immediately before your journey to England. There should be at least an interval of a week. On Wednesday, or Thursday, the Diet will be closed. After the Grand Parade on the 23rd, the Prince is either going to the opening of the Eidtkuhn, or to that of the Trier, railway. His absence will last for a week, and will, I hope, do something towards refreshing the much-worried mind of His Royal Highness.'

As a matter of fact, the reported programme of the Prince Regent's journey was altered and added to in one or two points. Accompanied by Prince Frederick William, he opened the new Eastern and Western roads, and the ceremonies afforded various opportunities for public declarations, significant greetings, and easily intelligible hints to the French neighbour. In Saarbrücken, the Prince Regent listened to a speech strongly directed against the Empire, and replied to it with patriotic assurances.

Thereupon, the Prince Regent arranged to make a stay in Baden-Baden, on which occasion the South German sovereigns were to be invited to a friendly meeting in the course of the month of June. Napoleon, who was much inconvenienced by the words that had fallen in the Rhine provinces, appears, in consequence, to have determined to bring about the desired interview at any price. He built his plan upon the circumstance, that the sojourn of the Prince Regent on the French frontier afforded a reasonable ground for the Chief of the neighbouring State to go and greet him, in accordance with the forms of political etiquette.

Thus the news of the great interview sprung up again in the first week of June, and caused all the greater uneasiness, the more it was contradicted in Berlin. The steps which had been taken there, argued evident indecision. If the newspapers declared, that the consent of the Prussian Government had only been given after minute and private preliminary negotiations, which Count Pourtalès carried on personally during his stay in Berlin, this certainly corresponded with

the Prince Regent's cautiousness and correct mode of thinking. But, as the whole matter was at the last moment precipitated, and had altogether been wrapped too long in mysterious darkness, the success of all these efforts, in face of public opinion, was very slight.

The Prince Regent had not only demanded the assurance from Napoleon, that there should be no discussion on questions which involved any alteration of the system of States, but he also desired, that the meeting should take place in the presence of the neighbouring Sovereigns, *i.e.* the Kings of Bavaria and Wurtemberg. However, none of the Courts in North Germany had been informed of the Congress, and the matter had consequently been viewed in Hanover and Saxony, as if there were some deep political reason for this omission.

Although the interview was to take place on the 16th of June, the *mot d'ordre* was issued in Berlin on the 12th, that only the Sovereigns directly concerned: Darmstadt, Baden, Wurtemberg, Bavaria, were to be present on the occasion. As to the King of Saxony, the Prince Regent intended to meet him previously in Leipzig, for which purpose a proposition had been forwarded to Dresden, but had not yet been answered.

On the King of Hanover, these preparations, which had only partly become known to him, produced so alarming an effect, that, in the evening of the 12th of June, he determined to set out on a mysterious journey, and, travelling by night to Berlin, drove straight from the station to the Prince Regent's door.

In a work recently published from Hanoverian sources, it may be found related with a good deal of humour, how George V, after having ardently prayed to God for enlightenment, suddenly hastened to the railway station, without the knowledge of his Ministers. It was only after he had entered his saloon carriage, that he found time to don his Prussian uniform as chief of the Zieten Hussars. As to the Prince Regent, he was then literally surprised in his bed-room.

The interview, during which, according to the same Hanoverian account, the King is said to have been extremely

moved, ended by the Prince Regent declaring Hanover's presence in Baden-Baden to be highly desirable. The consequence was, that the King of Saxony had also to be invited to Baden-Baden, and thus the interview with the Emperor of the French was at the last moment transformed into a Congress of Sovereigns.

On the 13th of June, in the evening, the Prince Regent left Berlin, and found the King of Bavaria already in Baden. The three other Kings arrived in the afternoon of the 15th. The Grand Duke of Baden accomplished the difficult task of the host at this assembly with approved skill, and the Grand Dukes of Weimar and Darmstadt, as well as the Duke of Nassau, also appeared in Baden-Baden. Prince Hohenzollern made the journey there, not in an official capacity, but under the pretext of paying a family visit.

Upon the first news of the bringing about of the interview, I was also determined to appear in Baden, and intimated my intention in Berlin. Owing to a misunderstanding, however, my simple communication had the importance of an enquiry attached to it, and I received from Duncker a letter addressed to the Chief of my Cabinet, the contents of which may not be without some value in elucidating the view of the whole event still prevalent in Berlin on the 12th of June:

'Although I have already replied, this morning, to the questions put by you, I will not fail to answer them once more.

'The Prince will start to-morrow evening, or to-morrow afternoon, by special train, probably *via* Leipzig and Corbetta. It was intended to invite the King of Saxony to come to Leipzig. The Emperor Napoleon intends to reach Baden-Baden on the 15th, at eight o'clock in the evening. He will stay the 16th, and leave again in the afternoon of the 17th. The Prince Regent will remain in Baden at least four weeks, probably until the end of July.

'Upon Major von Reuter's enquiry, as to whether the Duke should repair to Baden-Baden, to be present at the interview, I have answered: that, after the attitude which the Duke took

up last year, he would expose himself to the danger of being ignored by the Emperor Napoleon: that the presence of the Duke might have a disturbing effect upon the negotiations with the German Sovereigns, which will follow upon the meeting with the Emperor Napoleon, because His Highness is neither a *persona grata* with the King of Bavaria, nor with the King of Wurtemberg: finally, that I thought it would be the best thing, and a real service to Prussia, if the Duke made his journey to London *viâ* Baden. Then, both the meeting with the Emperor Napoleon, and with the German Sovereigns, would be over, etc.

'DUNCKER.'

In spite of these well-meant counsels of my worthy friend, I went to Frankfort on the 14th, and informed my brother-in-law by telegraph from there, that I should appear in Baden-Baden. When I arrived, at noon on the following day, in the festively decorated town, upon which, at this juncture, the whole attention of European politicians was rivetted, I drove straight from the station to the palace. But I did not find the Grand Duke at home. While still in travelling attire, therefore, I tried to meet him in the Villa Messmer, where the Prince Regent was wont to reside, and where my brother-in-law would most likely be present.

The two sovereigns had just returned from a walk, and met me in the entrance-hall. As I had correctly assumed, the Prince Regent received me with the greatest kindness, and exclaimed, in the best of spirits: 'Why, this is glorious, that you have come here; now we have a secretary. You had better accompany us at once, and formulate what I intend to say to the Emperor at the reception.'

He led me and the Grand Duke into his study, and requested me to take a seat at the writing-table. He then dictated the draft of an address, the terms of which were minutely considered and frequently altered, until they met with His Royal Highness' satisfaction. The Prince of Hohenzollern, who, as already mentioned, was only present in Baden in a private capacity, was to be informed of the address, and

care was then to be taken, that the speech was communicated to the Emperor of Austria in the form in which it had just been drawn up.

The Prince Regent declared this programme, which had been settled, as it were, by himself, to be the basis of any discussions which he should have with Napoleon, and spoke to this effect to all the Princes, who assembled at his house before dinner. Upon European questions generally, the Prince Regent assured them, he did not intend to enter, and, if specially German questions were mentioned, he meant to say that he would never allow even the very smallest part of Germany to be ceded to France.

In the evening, Napoleon, after having been received in Kehl by Prince William of Baden, arrived in Baden, and took up his quarters in the Villa Stephanie, which had been placed at his disposal by the Grand Duke. The French had assembled in numbers at the entry of the Emperor, and the host of police-agents who had hastened to Baden from Paris, took care that the reception customary in Paris should not be wanting. The Emperor appeared to be in the best of spirits, and his intercourse with the Prince Regent and the other German Princes soon assumed a very cordial character. Simple civilian dress was worn at the meetings, and, since the Emperor had resolved only to revel in assurances of peace, most of the illustrious visitors present soon gave evidence of a feeling of the highest satisfaction and relief.

Even the King of Hanover, who, up to that date, had not yet bestowed the insignia of his Order on the Emperor, was much touched by the amiability with which Louis Napoleon delivered to him the Legion of Honour. Several extremely conservative utterances of the Emperor had entirely altered the King in his opinion of the 'parvenu.'

The chief meeting between the Prince Regent and the Emperor took place on the 16th at noon, on which occasion, according to the assurances of the Prince Regent, the Emperor behaved prudently, modestly, and with all the amiability which he had so abundantly at his command.

After the Emperor had left the villa Messmer, an innumer-

able crowd of people assembled in front of the house, who tumultuously cheered the Prince Regent, and would not cease, until His Royal Highness appeared on the balcony, and thanked them.

A feeling of joy pervaded the public in Baden, and spread from there throughout the whole German world, that Germany's most powerful sovereign had impressed her dangerous neighbour with the conviction, that all her sovereigns and races were united in rejecting the aspirations of France. I do not believe, however, that this private conversation, during which no one else was present but the Prince Regent's wife, and concerning which I am not able to give any information, can have afforded much opportunity to give any serious answer to important questions. But the popular belief, which possessed itself of the matter, summed up what had happened, in the term, 'sent to the right about.' It was a great satisfaction to think that the all-powerful Emperor with his proposals must have met with a rebuff from Prussia's ruler, for there was once for all nothing else expected from the December man but the mischief he was intent on breeding by his seductive artifices.

My first meeting with Napoleon had taken place on Friday evening, directly after his arrival, when he took tea with the Grand Duke at the palace. The Grand Duke of Weimar and myself, as we lived at my brother-in-law's, were the only others present. The next morning, the Emperor permitted me to pay my visit at an early hour, and I had abundant leisure to enter into a very detailed conversation with him on the political situation.

He received me like an old acquaintance, and as if not the slightest shadow lay between that day and my last visit to Paris. I found him, as I always found him, cordial, without formality and empty phrases, and always going straight for the point which he had in his mind to discuss.

First of all, he expressed his regret, that it had been rendered impossible for me to see and speak with him, before the commencement of the Italian war, as he had desired: 'Do you recollect the telegram I sent you in February?

Many misunderstandings would have been obviated, if you had come to Paris. However, I comprehend very well, that your pronounced attitude in Germany prevented you from doing so.'

It would be all the more gratifying to him, so he added, if he might conclude from my renewed friendly advances, that nothing had been altered in my sentiments towards him. He then launched out into great eulogies on the Prince Regent and the other sovereigns, the meeting with which latter he declared to be an all the more valuable addition to his interview with the Prussian ruler, as there were several among them whose acquaintance he had not yet made.

As I did not leave his flattering remarks unanswered, he broke in again, as if he wished to shorten the preambles, and penetrate at once into the matter itself. 'I have come here,' he said, 'in order to deliver personally every assurance that can be desired, concerning my love of peace, and in order to prove to the whole world the necessity of a confident agreement between myself and my neighbours.

I thereupon declared with a certain solemnity, that love of peace was truly the prevailing sentiment in Germany, but that people certainly had the greatest distrust of the Emperor's policy.

'*Voilà le malheur*!' he broke in. 'Everybody gives himself the air of distrusting me.' In England, he explained with great vivacity of speech, they were accusing him of intending to wage war against the most powerful kingdom in the world, and were talking of the danger of an invasion. In Spain, they said he had the line of the Ebro in view for France. In Italy, he was accused of favouring the revolution in Sicily, in order to get the Island of Sardinia assigned to the Kingdom of Naples. In Belgium, men of moderate views were expecting that he would claim Hainault, whilst those who were hostile to him, declared the whole country to be in danger. As for the Germans, they were quite determined not to drop their preconceived opinion, that he was intent on conquering the Rhine provinces.

If all this were taken together, he went on to say, people must think him mad. The more he declared that he would

consider such a policy as imprudent with regard to his own country, as it was unfair towards the other sovereigns, the more people believed just the reverse. Laughing, he cited, as a proof of this, Herr von Pfordten, who had said in plain words to the French Ambassador, that one always had to be prepared for the opposite of what the Emperor had said.

The cause of all this, he added after a while, lay exclusively in the Press, which never ceased undermining his good name all the world over. 'If it is said daily, that I am going to steal, people at last end by really believing it.'

I replied, that our Press was free, at least free enough to express great and universally shared sentiments. If this was frequently done in a clumsy way, it could only be regarded as the echo of the noise made by French newspapers. The Press all over the Empire, however, stood under the strictest control of the authorities; hence, it was natural that every threatening or clumsy word that was sent forth into the world from there, had an importance attached to it, as though it were approved by the Government.

At these remarks, the countenance of the Emperor grew dark for an instant, and, apparently controlling himself, he said in a tone of self-defence: 'This cannot be otherwise. Owing to the condition of France, every Government is obliged to curb the Press, but it cannot prevent all the clumsy things that happen day after day against my will. They do not take the trouble abroad, to draw a distinction between the newspapers that are really mine, and those which I can only influence indirectly.'

He then went on to speak, quite in a general way, of the criticism which had been passed on his mode of government, and mentioned the pamphlet, 'Despots as Revolutionists,' which he said he had read. 'These people proceed, after all, rather too harshly,' he said, in a lower voice, closing his *plaidoyer*, which had become rather vehement.

I replied, that no doubt every country had to be governed according to its peculiarities, and that a good deal was necessary in the one, which would be a mistake in the other, and frequently give rise to great difficulties. I then added,

soothingly, that he must not attach too great a weight to these general views of his government. The Germans, he might rest assured, would by far prefer to go hand in hand with the French nation, if only the latter would show more consideration for the innermost sentiments and interests of the German people, and, above all, for its honour and independence. I went on to say, that the principle of nationality, which he himself had conjured up, had now grown so strong in the German people, that the idea of losing even the very smallest town, had grown quite intolerable to them. He replied, that he understood this perfectly.

After a pause, he continued, 'Do you remember the conversations we had in former years? In the year 1854, when I told you how everything would come, unless matters were adjusted, you quite agreed with me. I regret nothing more deeply, than that our efforts at that time were attended with so little success. The consequences which we foresaw plainly enough, all actually ensued. They arose merely from the fact, that Austria was not honestly inclined to enter into the alliance which had been firmly established between France and England, and Prussia would not enter into it at all.

'However,' he continued, 'England herself has also been to blame for this, because she conceded no advantages to the allies, and only demanded sacrifices in favour of Turkey.' As I could not say that he was wrong on this point, he added, 'And I am made responsible for consequences which people have brought about themselves.'

He then dwelt upon the course of events in the Italian war, and said, that he had had more luck than he ever expected; that he had seen the Austrian army in its most favourable light, and that its failure in the campaign had been solely due to a certain lack of energy, and to the exaggerated fear of all responsibility on the part of the individual leaders. He regretted that Austria had hesitated to carry out the peace of Villafranca, as he had personally discussed it with the Emperor, and said that this had become the cause of all the fresh difficulties in Italy. The Grand Duke of Tuscany might have had his country preserved to him, and, had Austria

acted skilfully towards Venice, the antipathy against her there would have disappeared.

As I doubted the correctness of these latter assertions, and pointed out, that the state of things after the war had been nothing else but war in a covert form, he declared himself, for the present, quite incapable of undertaking any campaign, the organisation of his army being untenable. He had no reserves at all, and the way to procure them would, according to the present system, lead to unfair proceedings, which the French nation was very loath to tolerate. As to his maritime forces, he called them '*insignifiantes*,' and was at a loss to understand how the English naval power, which was equalled by no other, could be pronounced the weaker of the two, since they knew well enough in England how to estimate and judge of the power of a navy.

This gave him the impression, he said, as if they wanted to bring about discord by artificial means. Altogether, public opinion in England was *indéfinable*, and had too great an influence upon the Crown, Parliament, and the Ministers, to allow of any one foretelling, in the most distant way, what England really intended. He adduced a number of instances out of the Crimean War.

Finally, he came to speak of Denmark, and regretted that the '*bons conseils*' which he had given to the King, to make his peace with the population of the German Duchies, and to avoid a fresh rupture with the German Confederation, appeared to be bearing no fruit. He was now actually accused of having concluded a formal *traité* with Denmark, which was not true.

I replied, that the question of the Duchies was a purely German one, and a fresh example of the fact, that nationalities could not be suppressed with impunity, with which remark the Emperor declared his lively concurrence, only to jump at once from this topic to the annexation of Savoy.

Perceiving my doubts as to the possibility of comparing these two things, he repeated several times, that Savoy was far more French than Italian, and that the sympathies of the population had at all times belonged to France. Besides, he had been obliged to offer the French nation some equivalent

for their assistance in Italy, and for the enormous sacrifices they had brought But he made no mention of Nice.

I remained at the topic of his policy of annexation, and ventured to remark, that the feelings of nations were not everywhere expressed in the same way. With regard to the national spirit, I said, one must beware of confounding France with Germany, and Germany with Italy. In Germany, there is, in spite of all national tendencies, a strong feeling for the hereditary dynasties, which is wanting in those countries.

I appealed also to my former conversations with the Emperor on the subject of Germany, which he declared had remained deeply fixed in his memory. I said that, in the six years that I had had the good fortune to become better acquainted with him, the national sentiment in Germany had grown enormously, and had surpassed the expectations of all careful observers. It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that the irritability of the nation had grown in proportion to its aspirations, and that Germans were now-a-days still easier to wound, than would have been thought possible in former years.

My firm language, and the animated way in which I expounded my convictions, appeared to have made the Emperor pensive. At length, he broke his silence by saying, that he could only take the friendly reception he had met with here on the part of so many sovereigns, to mean that they wished to live in peace with him. Fixing his gaze upon me with an unsteady, searching expression, as he was wont to do in such moments, he said that he could not possibly imagine that they were on the point here of bringing about a coalition against him.

I could only assure him, what was true, that coalitions would certainly arise, if they thought themselves seriously threatened by him, and that he had it in his own power to keep on a friendly footing with all the German sovereigns.

On the whole, the impression he made upon me, was, that he was seriously anxious to have peace *for the present*, and that he really considered himself too unsafe and inadequately prepared, in respect of his forces and means, to brave a coali-

tion. In his heart, he was no less alarmed at the idea of great complications, than he had been, before the Crimean War. He felt flattered by the interview, and was in high spirits in the midst of all these crowned heads. It afforded him the greatest satisfaction to have met with a kind of acknowledgment of equality in Baden, by the perfectly friendly reception accorded to him on the part of so many old families.

There was not the remotest idea of the situation being such, as some newspapers, absurdly confounding the actual events with the recollections of Erfurt and the proverbial parterre of Kings, thought themselves warranted in describing it. Though they may thereby have only intended to characterise the outward efforts of the Emperor to emulate the arrogance of his uncle, still, such a view can hardly have been shared by anybody who took part in the events themselves. As a matter of fact, the Emperor had very little intention, or inclination, to strut in high buskins before the Kings and Princes congregated round the Prince Regent.

I recollect a remarkable scene that occurred at the lunch which took place on Sunday in the old castle. Whether the Emperor was fatigued by the morning service, which he had just attended in the Catholic Church, or by the visit which he had afterwards paid to the King of Hanover, or by the efforts of the previous days, in short, when all the Sovereigns were assembled with him in the old castle, he was suffering from a kind of nervous depression. Whilst we were sitting at lunch, a fearful thunderstorm broke out, which, however, only lasted a short time. But the Emperor was so startled by the phenomenon, that it was thought necessary to allay his fears, and he declared repeatedly, and with a sense of the greatest discomfort, that he hardly ever remembered having experienced anything so dreadful.

Fortunately, the drive back to Baden was accomplished under a clear sky, and thus, at the dinner which soon afterwards took place at the Grand Duke of Baden's, the illustrious guests assembled again in the best of spirits. In the evening, the Emperor paid his farewell visits, and left at ten o'clock, driving straight from an evening party at the Duchess of

Hamilton's to the station. The Grand Duke of Baden accompanied the Emperor to the railway station, where, so far as I remember, none of the other princely visitors, except myself, put in an appearance.

The cordial manner in which the Emperor took leave, has never left my memory. His mood was like that of a man who has accomplished an extremely successful expedition. He said to me in parting, that I would now surely have no objection to visit him again very soon in Paris. He thanked the Grand Duke in terms that came from his heart.

According to the programme of his journey, he crossed the German frontier before midnight, for the next day recalled the memory of Waterloo, which necessarily prevented the Emperor from holding any intercourse with Prussia's Sovereign. For this reason, it had been carefully arranged that the interview should come to an end before the 18th.

A few days after my departure from Baden-Baden, I proceeded to London, where I was immediately surrounded, as it were, by numerous politicians, who were eager to gain information and reassuring accounts from one who had taken part in the more private events of the last few weeks on the Continent.

I arrived in London late in the evening of the 25th of June, after a stormy sea-passage. The Queen and my brother had just visited the famous volunteer-camp at Aldershot. I went there the next day by special train, and found the Royal party at 9 o'clock at breakfast. At 10 o'clock, we mounted our horses to attend the manœuvres, which were executed by 23,000 men with 56 cannons. As the ground was excellently adapted for military evolutions, and fine movements could easily be carried out, it was natural that the English papers criticised the review and the manœuvres in the most favourable terms, nor was there, indeed, the slightest fault to find with the good bearing of the English volunteers. However, the dispositions, regarded from a military point of view, were of so extremely innocent a nature, that I thought I ought not to conceal from the English statesmen, how very little

was to be expected from these performances, in the event of an actual war.

However, this view was only shared to a very slight extent, and there was no end to the praise given in letters and descriptions, concerning the excellent impression made by the volunteers, when they defiled before the Queen. So much seemed to me to be certain, notwithstanding, that, if the Emperor had not abstained from the much-apprehended invasion from other reasons, the volunteer batallions would assuredly not have prevented him. In the evening, I returned with the Royal party to London, where the family dinner took place at 8 o'clock.

The next day, my brother answered the letter which he had just received from the Prince Regent about the interview that had taken place in Baden-Baden. This letter contained mainly an account of those incidents which had a bearing on the general affairs of Europe. The Prince Regent gave, in particular, a rather detailed description of the conversations which Napoleon had held with him and other sovereign personages.

It was easy for me to supply the particulars that were still wanting in the account of the Prince Regent, and under these impressions my brother wrote a letter, which has been suppressed in the work on his life, probably for this reason, that Albert's view of the results attained, and altogether of everything that had passed, was less satisfactory than may have been expected in Berlin. He was unable to comprehend why the Prince Regent had not taken up a firmer attitude towards Napoleon; indeed, he was inclined to accuse the four Kings of being the cause of Germany's never rising up against her overweening and arbitrary neighbour, who was every day growing more and more odious to him.

The views of moderate men were generally on my side, hence also with regard to the interview in Baden, and I may say that I took every pains to soften my brother's mood. However, he evinced, in those years, a kind of satiety and disgust with regard to Germany, and more particularly

Prussia, of which his biographers have probably still at the present day scarcely any notion.

During my week's stay in London, meanwhile, I was able to convince myself, that there was no party there which had the very remotest inclination to enter into a treaty with Prussia. I spoke with men of all shades, with Ministers and Members of Parliament. But nobody showed the slightest faith in an alliance with Germany. The principal objection to everything I said respecting the war for the Rhine frontier, which I declared to be unavoidable, was always, that England would be there in good time to extricate Germany from her desperate situation, when once the conflict had commenced. Lord Palmerston said, he knew no State on the Continent that was reliable enough to allow of England provoking France still more, by entering into an alliance with it.

On my return journey from England, I travelled *via* Brussels, where the peaceful results of the Baden-Baden interview had produced an extremely favourable impression, though they had not fully reassured people.

My uncle had, innumerable times, summed up the great political question in the words Austro-Prussian alliance. He had now again been preaching to the same effect, in all quarters where his advice was listened to. He viewed this union quite in a patriarchally dynastic way, like in the year 1813, and I urged in vain, that such a friendship between the Sovereigns would have to be supported by an adjustment of interests in the States themselves.

In Berlin, my journey became the subject of attack on many sides. When the *Kreuzzeitung* committed the absurdity of saying that I had gone to London to overthrow Lord Palmerston, it thereby disclosed its intention of once for all compromising my position in the eyes of the English Cabinet and the public. It was not difficult to recognise on which side this desire was particularly cherished. But I could not find that the means employed had done me much harm in London. I was initiated into the views and intentions of the Government in the most candid and ready way on the part of the Ministers.

I also held all manner of intercourse with the political refugees in London. I spoke with Kinkel, Juch, and a good many others, and was fêted, too, in song and pamphlets, by the Germans living in London. A much greater consequence was afterwards attached to these relations, than they deserved, and they assumed a kind of diplomatic character, when Napoleon was informed that I had uttered some very hard words against him on these occasions, so that he himself remarked: *cela est peut-être exagéré.*

My uncle, who had been informed of Napoleon's displeasure, called upon me to trace the French agent. However, this was not possible, as my negotiations with the members of the German Colony in London had chiefly had the object of ascertaining by what means the German Societies in London could be brought into closer relations with the Nationalverein. Among these societies, there was one particularly, on which I thought I ought to bestow some notice, because it pursued, under the title 'German Unity and Liberty,' thoroughly sensible ends, and was likely to bring its influence to bear on public opinion in England. Besides, it seemed to me to be worth a few efforts to win over men, who were not without influence in London, to the better aims of the German national movement. Of a number of them, I was aware that they had carried on a correspondence with Herr von Meyern, which proved that it was not altogether useless to come into contact with them.

'However, after I had returned to Germany, my uncle's view seemed to become the prevailing one, since it looked as if the understanding preparing between Prussia and Austria, would really only be due to the initiative of the two rulers themselves.

Although the Prince Regent assured the Sovereigns in Baden, that he was in negotiation with Austria, and would shortly inform them of the results, they waited a long time in vain for satisfactory tidings. At last, however, it was said that the Emperor of Austria would meet the Prince Regent in Teplitz.

On the 22nd of July, I received the following report from

Berlin: 'The most important news of the day is, that, on the 26th inst., H.R.H. the Prince Regent and the Emperor of Austria will have a meeting. The arrangement has been made chiefly by letters exchanged between the illustrious parties concerned. Herr von Auerswald no doubt conferred on the subject with Count Rechberg in Vienna. But the matter has nevertheless been arranged directly, without him. The Emperor of Austria desired the interview, and the Prince Regent telegraphed last Sunday to Vienna, that he should be pleased to see him, and, since the Emperor left the choice of the place to him, he would propose Teplitz.

'Whether any decided and special arrangements will be come to, seems extremely doubtful. The opinion here, on the whole, is merely that the mutual feeling will improve and assume a more friendly shape, but that no agreements on special and positive points, and particularly no engagements on Prussia's part, must be expected.

'With regard to the proposals concerning the reform of the military constitution of the Confederation, people here have expressed themselves hitherto, one and all, in a doubtful and critical spirit. The guarantee for Venetia, on which Austria is obliged to set so great a value, is a very dubious point. Altogether, it is not in accordance with the tendency of Prussian policy to come to any positive determination.'

Further communications contained the news, that the Kings of Saxony and Bavaria likewise intended to appear in Teplitz, but that the Prince Regent preferred consulting with the former in Dresden. It subsequently came out, that the Middle States were endeavouring, by bringing about a German Congress of Sovereigns, to influence the relations between Austria and Prussia as much as possible. The idea that the Kings should likewise be present at the meeting in Teplitz, was advocated in Vienna. In Berlin, however, it was firmly rejected. Thus there was at least no need to fear that the two Great Powers would be interfered with in their settlements.

On the 26th of July, then, the two rulers appeared with their Ministers in Teplitz, nor would there have been any

thing to prevent the decisions of the Conference being recorded. The Cabinets, however, contented themselves with communicating, in Circular Notes, which were not destined for the public eye, a few particulars of the understanding arrived at between the illustrious parties, which were not of a very precise nature.

I endeavoured for a long time in vain to ascertain something more definite, and it was only on the 8th of August that I was favoured with the following particulars by a person in the confidence of Prince von Hohenzollern:

'The gentlemen on the Danube were told, we are ready to stand with you against France, but you must render it possible for us to do so. Our nation has forgotten neither Olmütz nor Carlsbad. In every friendly approach towards Austria, it beholds Carlsbad resolutions, and the re-instalment of the *Kreuzzeitung* party in office. But it is our parliament which, by its grant of monies, ultimately decides our foreign policy. You must endeavour, therefore, as far as possible, to conciliate and win over our people.

'In addition to this:

'1. Protestantism must be placed on an equality with Catholicism in Austria, and receive the same position in Austria, that Catholicism enjoys in Prussia.

'2. You must advance unerringly on the path of liberal reforms, which you have once entered upon.

'3. The Protectorate of the Middle States against Prussia in the Diet must be given up.

'Austria, it was urged, had it in her hand to show whether she really cared to obtain the effective assistance of German forces in the contingency of war. This she could do, by supporting Prussia's proposals for the military constitution of the Confederation with the Congress of the Middle States at Würzburg. At any rate, the position taken up in these matters in Vienna, would be a pledge of her sincere will, besides being a matter of the most urgent interest to Austria and Germany. They surely did not believe in Vienna, that the military constitution of the Confederation would enable Austria to gain the victory. Prussia, if attacked by France,

was at present certain of carrying the North German Powers with her. But the matter was different in Austria's case. The moment her forces were occupied in Italy, she could never rely on the South German contingent.

'Respecting foreign affairs especially, Austria admitted that the Eastern Syrian question was very awkward. She was, however, too much occupied with inner affairs, to take up any kind of pronounced attitude. As to Italy, she was expecting a new attack there shortly. It was said, in fact, that news had arrived of a treaty between Sardinia and France, by which Sardinia promised to cede the Riviera di Ponente and Genoa, in exchange for Venetia. This treaty appears to me very apocryphal. Nevertheless, the probability is great, that, at no very distant date,—whosoever may gain, or maintain, the preponderance in Italy, Garibaldi or Cavour—the leaders there will be in the position to hurl the unshackled national forces against Austria. I scarcely think that King Francis II will maintain his position another fortnight in Naples, and, by the autumn, things may already be ripe.

'On our side, the guarantee for Venetia, which was again ardently desired in Teplitz, has been positively refused: We said, that we should not interfere, so long as the struggle was carried on between Italy and Austria alone. Only the interference of France could afford Prussia a motive to intervene. Nor did Prussia—and I think very rightly—accede to Austria's desire that, in case Venetia were attacked by the Italians alone non-Austrian Federal troops—preferably Bavarians, otherwise Prussians—should occupy the frontier of the Federal territory: evidently a sign, how weak they feel themselves in Vienna.

'They were very content at finding any goodwill at all on our side, in the event of an interference on the part of France. They formally promised to proceed with the liberal reforms, and gave hope of good will in the subject of the military constitution.'

I answered hereupon as follows: 'Although the expression of our opinions towards the Austrians could have no immediate practical results, yet it is a great gain that such

expressions from the highest quarter have been personally heard in Vienna, and that they are now enabled there to gain an idea of the future, without at once assuming it to be coloured by Beust's or Pfordten's policy.

'You have not written anything as to how far the Prince was satisfied with the Emperor, etc., nor what impressions Prince Hohenzollern took away with him. I send you here a few words which a person of high rank, in the suite of the Emperor, wrote to me from Teplitz: "I think, on the whole, German policy would get along better, if everybody would only sweep before his own door. If priests and squires are certainly not the fit organs of government, barricadiers and doctrinaires are, at any rate, just as little qualified. The many accoucheurs who desire to assist at the re-birth of Austria, are strangling the child, which, in the natural way, would come to the world quite quietly. Count Rechberg's will is good, but the channel through which he has to steer, is difficult. Nor does the conflict between the federalist, the so-called old conservative, and the unitarian, or modern liberal, parties facilitate the position of the Government, since none of these parties has so decided a preponderance, that one could unconditionally join its programme. To precipitate matters, is more dangerous here than elsewhere, and it is necessary to wait, until the elements of fermentation perhaps separate."

'These few words convey a great deal. They will go on tacking, until the ship begins to sink. The policy of the four Kings will not keep it afloat. I regret immensely, that it was not vouchsafed to me to be present at the meeting. It would have been possible, perhaps, to have rendered a good many things intelligible to the Austrians, from another point of view.'

The answer to my question was not long in coming: 'Major von Reuter has been kind enough to deliver the letter of Your Highness to me personally. The accounts from the Emperor's immediate circle are of the greatest interest. According to the similar statements of Prince Hohenzollern and Baron von Schleinitz, the personal impression he made, was

more favourable than had been expected. His bearing is praised as being calm and well-considered, very polite, but at the same time very cold. Your Highness' sinister anticipations are thus only too well-confirmed. They will go on tacking, until it is too late.'

The writer of these lines applied these latter words of mine chiefly to Austria, but it was not difficult to recognise that they were at this moment just as applicable to Prussia. On both sides, a point had gradually been reached, where the art of diplomatists could get no further. Friendly advances, which never really solved any question, and the increasing fear and dislike of the popular tendencies of the nations, were not sufficient to break the preponderance of France in Europe. According to what my uncle assured me, the English Ministry had—in consequence of the meeting in Teplitz—begun to gain more faith in Germany's power of resistance. But he who glanced at the actual state of affairs, was obliged to own, that diplomacy had not been able to advance these things by a single step.

In August, King Leopold, with his accurate knowledge of the facts, sketched, in his peculiar way, so incomparable a picture of the diplomatic situation, that his letter will serve as the best conclusion to this chapter of personal negotiations between the European rulers.

'WIESBADEN, *the 25th of August*, 1860.

'MY DEAR ERNEST,—I am sending you a safe messenger, in order to give you a few opinions on the Nationalverein. The Verein is very distasteful to the Sovereigns, beginning perhaps with the Emperor of Austria. The Emperor of Austria may be afraid, moreover, that the Nationalverein pursues the object of excluding Austria from Germany.

'On this score, Austria ought to be frankly reassured. Although not an entirely pure German State, Austria rules, nevertheless, over nations which have long been connected with Germany, and she thereby considerably increases the German element. It is, of course, to be regretted that there are two German Powers. But, as matters stand, since France has been

stupidly allowed to regain her old supremacy, and millions of Italians have now become her allies against Germany, we can no longer dispense with a great Power in the South, and another in the West, against Germany's hereditary enemy. The Nationalverein, I hear, has the intention of discussing its programme in September. Its enemies hope that it will collapse in this effort. To obviate this, the things chosen for the programme should be exclusively such, as are generally intelligible, and without which there can be no Germany; which, therefore, even your enemies cannot urge against you.

'A. The first and chief point is, and remains, that the German is rightly determined to have his nation and his name placed as high as is the case with other nations, who are manifestly inferior to him in culture and character. This can be attained by the firm will of the nation, and the federal organisation is no hindrance. The United States of America have the same form. The separate States are each organised and administrated perfectly independently, and still the whole forms a Power which is feared.

'B. The second point is, that the Germans must pledge their word, not to suffer the very smallest bit of Germany to be torn away by foreign Powers. There has been only too much torn off old Germany. On this occasion, it should be declared, that, in case Germany should again be forced to fight, the greatest efforts would then be made, to win back those parts of which she has already been deprived. This is necessary towards France, who is always talking of her natural frontier, and it will inspire her with respect.

'C. It should be said, firmly and sharply, that every German who proves base enough to propose mutilations of the Fatherland, will be persecuted as a traitor, in every possible way, by the Nationalverein.

'D. The Italian Question deserves to be touched upon. The Italians are bent upon gaining possession of the whole Adriatic. The ports on the Italian side are bad, those in Istria and Dalmatia, on the other hand, excellent. Hence, Germany will be quite cut off from the Mediterranean, which would give her an entirely altered and very disadvantageous

position. If you show, in this question, that you consider it from the German point of view, and not merely as an Austrian affair, this will make them more cautious, besides strengthening the position of the Regent, who regards the matter from the same point of view as ever.

'Ideas about parliaments and the like are premature; hence, they would only lead to disagreement, and just bring about, what the enemies desire. The national element must be strengthened; there is no need for it to destroy Separatism, in so far as there may be anything useful in it. The Maryland man has different interests from those of the Luisiana man, yet both stand up for the United States, and Germany must do likewise, and she will be powerful and respected. Old Holland was also a Federal State, before the great French Revolution, and, forsooth, a powerful and respected State, too, small as it was.

'The spirit in Germany appears to me to be very good. All the more necessary, therefore, that the desirable steps should, for heaven's sake, not result in a fiasco. They are now very favourably disposed towards Germany in England, because they are beginning to believe that she will defend herself. The English doubted this, even while you were still in England. Baden and Teplitz were precious events. We here are very well-disposed. Also the King of the Netherlands, whom I have seen here, and the Dutch in general. All this is as it should be. Only, Germany must show herself united, and not dispute about details which are premature. Above all, let her secure her national existence; the particulars must be left to the future.

'My letter has grown long, but it is difficult to draw the line in a matter which so greatly concerns one's heart. With my best love, etc.

'LEOPOLD.'

A few days after the receipt of this remarkable letter, I hastened to Wiesbaden myself, to greet my uncle there, and, at the same time, dispose him more favourably in regard to the aims of our national movement. While I was with

him on the 1st of September, I had a severe struggle to sustain. As will have been seen from the foregoing letter, he was too well informed, not to expect that the German Governments would adopt the severest measures against all the tendencies for which I had hitherto so readily paved the way.

He did not deny, that he entertained apprehensions in reference to my own position. In return, I could not conceal the fact that I, on the contrary, considered the legal development of events in Germany would be threatened, if the Governments continued to pursue their reactionary path. I had no faith in the old diplomatic arts, with which, even in less difficult times, it had been impossible to stay the revolution; whereas my uncle, as the advocate of past times, preached tranquillity, moderation, and faith in the Government. May be that, at the moment, too much or too little was asserted on the right and on the left. But in one respect I proved to have correctly understood the development of events, inasmuch as the German question was not left to rest until it had been solved; though it was solved, indeed, in a severer form than I had expected.

CHAPTER III

THE ITALIAN REVOLUTION.—RUSTOW'S ACCOUNT OF THE FORMATION OF THE VOLUNTEER-CORPS.—THE ENGLISH ROYAL FAMILY IN COBURG.—DEATH OF THE DOWAGER-DUCHESS OF SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA.—ACCIDENT TO PRINCE ALBERT.—HIS NERVOUS PROSTRATION.—THE QUEEN AND THE PRINCE AT COBLENTZ.—THE THREE MONARCHS AT WARSAW.—WARLIKE SYMPTOMS IN FRANCE.—DEATH OF KING FREDERICK WILLIAM IV OF PRUSSIA.—THE NEW KING.—THE ATTEMPT ON KING WILLIAM'S LIFE AT BADEN-BADEN.—EFFECT ON THE KING'S MODE OF THINKING.—DEATH OF THE DUCHESS OF KENT.—BETROTHAL OF THE PRINCE OF WALES TO PRINCESS ALEXANDRA OF DENMARK.—DEATH OF KING PEDRO OF PORTUGAL.—PRINCE ALBERT'S FATAL ILLNESS.—HIS LAST DAYS AND DEATH. THE DUKE IN ENGLAND.—THE 'TRENT' AFFAIR.

AFTER the interchange of pacific assurances in Baden-Baden, diplomatists were able to take the waters in peace. For this year, at least, our sick part of the globe was secured against the outbreak of a fresh great war. The smaller affairs of State were left to take their inevitable course, and even the distant revolution in Sicily and Naples was now borne with fatalistic resignation by the disciples of the old diplomatic art.

How often had Austrian batallions hastened to the southern point of Europe, in order to give security to the crumbling thrones. Now, nobody thought any longer of upholding the policy of Prince Metternich, who had been dead for half a year. Notes, reservations, and protests, this was all that now went forth into the world from the proud palace of the Kaunitzes, Thuguts, and Metternichs. In Teplitz, Austria once more endeavoured to seize Prussia's 'free hand,' but the old tradition had not found in its heart to make concessions

to the Prince Regent in the sense of German national development.

Hence, it was only the West that still played a part on the classic ground of international policy in Central and Lower Italy. In Sardinia, Cavour had once more assumed the management of the Ministry, and was pursuing, with a skill that was already approved, the path towards a united Italy between Napoleon and Palmerston.

From the 4th of April, when, for the first time, the name of Victor Immanuel sounded in the street fights in Palermo, until the entry of the King of Italy into Naples, on the 7th of October, people in Europe, and notably in the much alarmed Cabinets, had grown accustomed to believe the most incredible things to be true, if they appeared under the firm of 'Garibaldi.' Men saw the expedition to Sicily, the taking of Palermo and Messina, the landing in Calabria, the storming of Reggio, the entry into Naples, Salerno, and the battle on the Volturno; they saw the Sardinian army enter the States of the Church, the Papal power destroyed at Castelfiardo, and Ancona occupied by the Piedmontese.

And all these events bore an almost fabulous character. A kingdom possessing an army of 150,000 men is overthrown by means of volunteer expeditions, the first of which is undertaken by not more than 1070 red-shirts. An organised fleet is unable to prevent the transport of volunteers, who reach the coast on bad steamers; and, in a series of the strangest battles, the ten times superior land-forces of a helpless king are vanquished.

It is far from my intention to enter into a description of these singular events, of which it might be said, that the bravery displayed in them was wrapped up in English bank-notes. What I ascertained on the subject, from the accounts of persons who were pretty familiar with the matter, is not sufficiently connected to be related here. But I had the impression, that a number of very powerful hands were at work, who had good reason to conceal their identity from the world. When the veil which is spread over the secret actions of this drama, is once lifted up, a great deal will appear

natural, which contemporaries looked upon as marvellous, and regarded as a kind of divine judgment.

When I was in London, at the end of June, the enthusiasm for Garibaldi had just reached its highest pitch there. A few days previously, Palmerston had expressed the harshest opinions on the Neapolitan Government in Parliament, and had inflamed men's minds against the Royal troops who had bombarded Palermo. In those very days, the unhappy Bourbon, urged on by England, performed his fatal wheel-about towards Sardinia, which gave the power into the hands of a Ministry in favour of the Italian Confederation. The Italian tricolor was hoisted on the Royal Palace, and Neapolitan officers treated with Garibaldi.

I could see plainly enough, while in England, how that country was staking its whole moral influence on the cause of the revolution, and I had a strong suspicion that substantial assistance was not wanting either.

With regard to the inner affairs of South Italy, and the organisation of the volunteer corps, I obtained some interesting accounts from William Rüstow, a few particulars of which the reader will, even at the present day perhaps, be glad to learn. Rüstow himself was occupied in Genoa with the formation of the volunteer corps, and was appointed to lead the Terranuova expedition against the Papal States. When, in consequence of the serious interference of Napoleon, this expedition had to be abandoned, Rüstow joined the campaign against Naples, and led his men over to Garibaldi. By this means, he was enabled to take accurate notes, especially of the commencement and the development of the so-called Neapolitan war of liberation.

'In all the capitals,' he wrote, after his return to Switzerland, 'there existed, in Upper and Central Italy, so-called unitarian societies, with committees at their head. These stood in connection with the Soccorso Garibaldi, conducted by Bertani.

'From the Soccorso Garibaldi, the summons went forth to the committees to enlist recruits. This was accomplished by secretly spreading proclamations in private circles, which naturally, however, also became known in wider circles.

'The committees instituted lists, and inscribed in them the names of those who were announced. In doing so, they took care to divide them at once into companies, according to the districts from which they came. Persons who seemed adapted for special service, in particular as quarter-masters of companies and batallions, or as musicians, were immediately entered as such. Officers, in so far as they did not come from a standing Italian, or from the Austrian, army, and in so far as they did not claim higher grades than they had filled before, were only provisionally entered with this or that grade.

'On some occasions, the committees received notice from entire societies of mechanics, whose serviceable members formed companies of their own. These were left to choose their own officers; however, with a reservation. For the most part, these corps distinguished themselves especially. I will only mention the Bersaglieri of Milan, the Carabinieri of Genoa, who were in the front line on the 19th of September and the 1st of October, and the riflemen of Bologna, who covered themselves with glory in defending the weak garrison of Cajazzo, and who had scarcely 200 men left out of 500.

'There were also other ways of forming corps. We wanted an engineer-corps. I had begun the formation of one in Genoa, but the officer appointed to it, a young architect, proved incapable. About a week before the day fixed for the rising, two young architects from Milan presented themselves, and promised me to furnish the required company of engineers, composed of builders, in good time, according to my instructions. They received a recommendation to the unitarian committee in Milan, and, a week later, the company entered Genoa in good time, completely equipped and armed. It proved a pattern company, and did, when necessary, also artillery and infantry service.'

In a similar way—I will not use Rüstow's extensive account verbatim—the unitarian committees furnished everything that was necessary for the equipment of the expedition: guns, cannons, munition, train, ambulances. The equipment depots were in Genoa, that is to say, as the Sardinian Govern-

ment raised difficulties, upon ships which had been brought into the roads for this purpose from England and Hamburg.

The committees also defrayed the transport costs to the ports of Genoa, Livorno, and La Spezzia, where the men were concentrated. Cavour had only placed the railways and telegraphs at their disposal for one or two days. Moreover, it was not always possible to proceed with the formation of the batallions in Genoa. During the most difficult times, 1200 men once arrived at night, and the authorities refused to allow them to enter the town. Rüstow organised them, under difficulties, on the open field, at an hour's distance from Genoa, by torch-light. He appointed an able commander, and this troop, which formed the second batallion of the brigade Milano, fought excellently on the 19th of September, although its whole military education had consisted in four days' drill in Milazzo, three marches in Sicily, two in Calabria, and six in the Principato.

While on march, however, the strictest discipline was enforced, and everything settled in a regular and military manner. Only cavalry was seriously lacking, nor did this circumstance improve, until, on the occasion of the Arriano expedition, Bonanno's brigade capitulated, which furnished 150 cavalry horses. As to artillery baggage, on the other hand, there would have been no deficiency, only there were too few useful hands to man the guns. But for this drawback, the Neapolitan expedition would have attained still more rapid successes. 'But after all,' so Rüstow closes his report,' 'we managed very well, as we were.'

It stands to reason, I think, that Rüstow's praise of his volunteer corps was only warranted, inasmuch as they were opposed to an army which had as many visible as invisible enemies to contend against. Owing to Rüstow's views, however, the judgment passed on the Neapolitan army in Germany was a much too unfair one. In those days, when all Europe was beginning to rebel against the militarism of France and Prussia, the tidings of Garibaldi's successes, which arrived from Sicily and Naples, were viewed as brilliant proofs that military affairs would, everywhere, shortly be re-

formed after the democratic doctrinary pattern of the militia-system. The conflicts which soon arose in Prussia, with regard to the term of service and the army organisation, were not a little influenced by the ideas which had been formed on the struggle in South Italy. Even in England, men were quite full of the idea that the volunteer system, as it existed there, marked the future of European military arrangements.

During the period of the struggle for the unity of Italy, the Royal Family of England paid a long visit to Coburg. It was the last stay which my brother made in Germany, the last time that he saw his native country. On the journey, a meeting took place in Aix-la-Chapelle between the English Royal party and the Prince Regent and his brother Prince Charles, and, as Lord John Russell accompanied the Queen, a political importance was attached to the presence of the English Royal Family in Germany which it never had.

Unfortunately, before the arrival of the Royal party, the happy event of a lengthened stay of the English Court in Coburg had been marred by the death of our step-mother, who had just at that time breathed her last in Gotha.

The Duchess had been in failing health for some time, and, although her death did not come unexpected, still, it considerably increased the already melancholy mood of my brother. The Duchess was a gifted woman, who, from her earliest years, which she had spent in Russia, had managed to preserve a broad view of life. The impressive circumstances of the Russian Court remained, in a measure, the standard of her way of thinking. It was thither she always looked, just as, two hundred years before, people had been guided in all and everything by the Court and the State of Louis XIV.

Notwithstanding, the Dowager Duchess possessed too much tact and fine feeling, ever to transgress in politics the delicate bounds which limit woman's participation in great affairs. Hence, my brother and myself, in spite of many a difference of opinion, had always been able to keep up the sincerest and heartiest relations to my father's consort, who was at the same time our cousin.

On the evening of the 20th of September, I went over to

Gotha with my brother and Prince Frederick William, afterwards the Emperor Frederick, to render the last honours to the deceased. After we had returned to Coburg, on the 1st of October, an accident occurred, which caused us great anxiety, and embittered the happy days we spent together.

My brother had driven with a four-in-hand from Kallenberg to Coburg. The horses took fright, and his carriage was smashed at the barrier which shuts off the railway from the road. The coachman was severely injured, and one of the horses fell dead on the spot. The Prince had leaped from the carriage just in time, but he unfortunately fell in doing so. Although he sustained but a trifling injury, it became only too evident on this occasion, how greatly the Prince's nervous system was shaken.

When Stockmar saw him after the catastrophe, and observed his deep despondency and melancholy, he said to me, on leaving the palace: 'God have mercy on us! If anything serious should ever happen to him, he will die.'

Although the trifling bruises on forehead and nose were soon healed, the Prince continued for some time in low spirits. The parting from his native country painfully engrossed his thoughts, several days in advance. On the 10th of October, on which day the departure of the Royal party was to take place at ten o'clock, my brother fetched me, without previous appointment, for a walk to the Castle. At one of the most beautiful spots, Albert stood still, and suddenly felt for his pocket handkerchief. I thought his wound had begun to bleed afresh. I went up to him, and saw that the tears were trickling down his cheeks.

He had become so absorbed in the thought that he would never see all this again, that his emotion got the better of him. When I tried to soothe him, he persisted in declaring that he was well aware that he had been here for the last time in his life. We turned back, and went home in silence. Since our first parting, I had never seen him give way to such outward emotion. I was, of course, far from thinking, at that time, that this unhappy presentiment could contain a prophetic truth.

In spite of these nervous excitements, the days we spent together had something extremely refreshing and satisfactory, and the recollection of them lightened the last year of my dear brother's life, which he spent far from Germany. Immediately after his departure, he gave expression to the satisfaction he felt at his visit, which, in spite of all mishaps, had been so successful. Writing on the 13th of October from Coblentz, whither he had gone to meet the Prince of Prussia and his wife, and also the Baden family, he said:

'I will not leave Coblentz without thanking you once more. . . . Our stay was so quiet and *gemüthlich*, that we have greatly benefitted by it, and even the misfortune in Gotha, and my accident, have not succeeded in damping this pleasant feeling. All the dear old spots spoke so vividly to my heart, and I was pleased, with you, that both they and your new creation were so fully appreciated, by the children as well as the strangers who accompanied us.

'Here, we have been received with love and kindness. Fritz and Louisa of Baden are here. The Princess is the same as ever towards us. French ways and the neighbour are correctly estimated. The Prince appears to be going to Warsaw with the best resolutions, determined to fetch nobody else's chestnuts out of the fire. He deplores and abominates the Italian events, of course, but does not intend to play any policy in favour of legitimacy and intervention. The weather is fearfully cold and wet, and we are all more or less affected by it. Ever, etc.'

The meeting of the English and Prussian Royal Families in Coblentz afforded an opportunity for a conference between the two Ministers, Lord Russell and Herr von Schleinitz. In view of the projected meeting of the Sovereigns of Prussia, Russia, and Austria, in Warsaw, which my brother mentions in the foregoing letter, Herr von Schleinitz felt it necessary to obtain a clear idea of the views of England. In Coblentz, no doubt, the two leaders of foreign affairs had time to enter into a detailed discussion on Italy and the European question of war and peace. Herr von Schleinitz afterwards spoke and wrote a great deal about the results of his conference, whereas

Lord Russell only communicated a few trifling particulars of it. For, all the contingencies which Herr von Schleinitz had taken account of, in respect to his attitude in the further development of the Italian kingdom, failed to produce any impression on Lord Palmerston's cabinet, whose standpoint, for the matter of that, was sufficiently well-known. On the other hand, with regard to the sole important contingency of an attack on Germany by Louis Napoleon, the English Minister treated his Prussian colleague to nothing but mysterious silence.

Under these circumstances, the Prince Regent, when in Warsaw, was from the outset destined to say 'Yes' to everything that had reference to the rotten peace, and to negative everything that could resemble action in any direction. This was then called Prussia's strength.

On the 10th of October, the Emperor of Russia had recalled his Embassy from Turin, under circumstances highly menacing towards Sardinia. From this step, Austria derived the hope that the old alliance of the Eastern Powers might be renewed. However, when the three European autocrats met in Warsaw on the 22nd of October, they found the situation materially altered by a letter from the Emperor of the French to the Czar. On the news of the meeting of the three monarchs, Napoleon had expressed the desire to be present also, but, as Alexander contrived to thwart this wish, the Emperor of the French wrote to him, saying that he trusted in his friendship and loyalty, more particularly as he was confident that Alexander would keep the convention which they had signed in Stuttgart for their mutual protection.

At the same time, Napoleon declared himself willing to preserve a neutral attitude in case of a conflict between Sardinia and Austria, but he demanded that Austria, if war really broke out, should give him the positive assurance that she would adhere to the treaty of Villafranca, even if she issued victorious from a war caused by Sardinia's aggression. Napoleon concluded this letter with the remark, that he was convinced that nothing would be done in Warsaw contrary to the interests of France, since the three sovereigns were aware

that he held the spirit of the oppressed nations in his hand.

The Emperor Alexander is said to have been so startled by this letter, that he positively restrained his two guests from entering into political details and combinations, pointing out the danger attending all formal settlements. He declared, that the personal meeting itself, and the interchange of friendly sentiments, contained the best guarantee against the aggressive policy of France and Italy, and that it was best not unnecessarily to provoke those two Powers by stipulations. On the other hand, Russia wanted to prevail upon Prussia and Austria to induce England to give up the Paris article concerning the *mare clausum* and the neutrality of the Black Sea.

While Prussia and Austria refused to agree to this separate wish of Russia, Russia and Austria, in like manner offered a firm opposition to Prussia's proposals concerning the emancipation of Schleswig-Holstein, and, when Austria, in her turn, adverted to the guarantee of her territorial possessions by the German Confederation, Prussia absolutely refused to support such a plan.

In this way, the interview in Warsaw was, if possible, still more unfruitful and futile, than had been the visit of the Queen of England to the Prince Regent in Coblentz. If to the latter, and more particularly to the conversations between Russell and Schleinitz, the term comedy was applied, the union of monarchs in Warsaw might have been called a tragedy, because the legitimistic hopes with which the Emperor of Russia had once more approached his old allies, had now actually suffered shipwreck.

On the 27th of October, the English Government officially recognised the revolution in the States of the Church, and also in Naples and Sicily, and the French Government commenced formidable preparations, which lasted throughout the winter, and made the perspective of the future appear in the gloomiest possible light. Garibaldi was already won over for an expedition against Hungary, and had drawn up his programme. In Poland a rising was in full preparation.

Thus, Napoleon was indeed warranted in referring to the oppressed nations, who were merely waiting for his signal.

In order to escape from the reproach in France, that the constitutional privileges which he was promoting in other countries, were suppressed at home, the Emperor, on the 24th of November, granted new and extended privileges to the great bodies politic. The Senate and the Chamber of Deputies were permitted to reply to the Emperor's Speech at the opening of the Session, and the Government Commissioner was henceforward bound to give every explanation concerning Home and Foreign Policy.

This decree granting the extension of the Constitutional Rights of the Chambers, was looked upon as an answer to the meeting of the Eastern Powers in Warsaw. The Emperor desired to prove that, arrived at the summit of his power, he was endeavouring to reconcile his Government with the spirit of liberty upon which he based his Foreign Policy.

If, on the other hand, the changes in the French Ministry, and more particularly the dismissal of Fould, were attributed to political causes, this was a mistake. The Minister of Finance had been sacrificed to the vengeance of the Empress, with whom he had been in conflict for a year, having finally to undergo one of those scenes in the Council of Ministers, which were provoked by this passionate woman more frequently with every year of her increasing influence. Count Walewski was appointed Minister of State, and this change was not interpreted in Germany as a favourable omen for the events to be expected in the spring, since the Empress, in connection with Walewski, was encouraging the Polish and Hungarian movement.

Considering that, in connection with these events, information was received to the effect that the arsenals were in a state of the greatest activity, that one house alone had undertaken to deliver 300,000 uniforms, and that, besides, a credit of several millions had been employed in fortifying the coasts and war-ports, it was to be marvelled at, that the German Powers carelessly looked on at these things, and could hardly

be induced, after long discussions, to do at least something for the badly neglected fortifications of Mayence.

I endeavoured, with my brother-in-law, the Grand Duke of Baden, and the Grand Dukes of Weimar and Oldenburg, to cast a proposal for the re-organisation of the Confederacy into the midst of the Federal Assembly, but, owing to the resistance of Herr von Schleinitz, whom Roggenbach, as Baden Minister, was not inclined to oppose, these attempts failed. After endless negotiations between the different Ministers, the zeal which had at first been shown by Baden, cooled down, and thus the year 1860 ended like all the previous ones—without acts.

With bitter humour, my brother congratulated me at New Year, adding the rider: 'Little as the good is, that I expect from it. Prince Napoleon is having 20,000 Polish uniforms made in Paris, which the Russians are fortunately aware of. Cavour is sending arms and munition into the Principalities, which are also to get a piece of Austria. In Metz, great military preparations are being made. Napoleon intends to raise 800,000 men in the spring; Cobden and Bright, who come with this mission straight from the Emperor, are to preach 'universal' peace here, and overthrow Palmerston; Prussia now suddenly intends to take dictatorial steps in Holstein; and here, they expect the Austrians to sell Venice, etc., etc. There is matter enough to look forward 'calmly' to the future.

A few days before New Year, the news spread, that the end of the unhappy King Frederick William IV was at hand. The second of January was the day of his death. On the 6th, I arrived in Berlin, with many other princely visitors, who had come to render the last honours to the King. I was quartered in Potsdam with the Crown Prince, and stayed in Berlin, after the funeral solemnities were over, until the evening of the 9th. On the 7th, the King was laid to rest in Sanssouci, and, with the thermometer at 18 degrees below zero, we followed the funeral procession on foot to the place of burial.

The death of the King was looked upon as a release from

agonising sufferings, and those who did not exactly meditate on the great hopes which had once been built on the life of this man, could hardly see the coffin-lid closed without the common human feeling of silent resignation.

But it was different with the Prince Regent, who had now to regard the Prussian crown as his own. The event had greatly shocked him personally, and had considerably deepened his sense of the weight and responsibility of his duties. Something like a faint change was effected in his opinions of men and affairs, and, at the solemn moment of general mourning, his noble heart appeared to have vowed to treat everything his deceased brother had desired, with the greatest piety and reverence.

In spite of all the opposite tendencies which had existed between them in life, the new King felt himself quite peculiarly drawn towards, and inwardly bound to, his predecessor, and a great deal that had been expected to be cast over-board by the Government of the Prince Regent, was now reverenced as a precious legacy of the illustrious will of an unhappy ruler. This sentiment of piety was soon transferred from things to persons, and whoever seemed to have been a friend of his dear brother, was looked upon by the new King as a faithful servant of the monarchy generally. Men who had not been believed to be greatly attached to the Prince of Prussia, were now consulted by the new King, because his brother had been fond of them.

It was truly a remarkable psychological phenomenon, that appeared to be developing out of the profound grief of the Prince Regent, whilst a large circle of princely personages, and envoys from every country, were surrounding the grave of King Frederick William IV. I had anticipated this change, and, from many a little observation, had been able to gather that it would come. Wider circles, too, had been struck with a singularly mystic feature in the new King's proclamation to his people, a trait which seemed quite foreign to the Prince before his brother's death.

Just at this time, I was diverted from any immediate participation in political affairs by a private matter which

occurred on my Austrian estates, and obliged me to make a journey to Vienna and Linz. When I returned to Thuringia, after an absence of several weeks, I found that the opposition between the parties had grown very acute. The Wurzburg Confederates had upset Prussia's proposals in Frankfort touching the question of the Chief Command of the Federal army, and Prussia, on the other hand, refused to agree to the reform of the Confederation proposed by the Grand Dukes and myself.

Towards the end of April, Herr von Schleinitz gave a confidential friend, who asked him for his opinion on this subject, an unmistakably negative answer. It was asked, what attitude the Prussian Government would assume, if a motion (though, no doubt, a hopeless one for the present), were to be made to appoint a central power, and representatives of the people in the Federal Diet.

Herr von Schleinitz denied the opportuneness of the question, and declared that, in face of the relations between Prussia and Austria, its solution was altogether impossible. Prussia, he said, could only take part in such a formation, if the leadership were entrusted to her, and Austria would never admit such a thing. Serious conflicts, however, were more than ever to be avoided at a time like the present, when there was unmistakably danger threatening from France. In any case, Prussia could not take the initiative in the matter.

At the same time, Herr von Schleinitz protested against the assumption, that, without a resolution of the entire Government, he could give any other than a purely personal opinion in so important a matter.

Whilst, by the course of events, and the old art politic itself, the German movement had been turned more and more into the open road, there happened in Baden-Baden, about the middle of July, one of those disgraceful and foolish crimes, which the fanaticism of the individual produces, and which commonly result in injury to the whole body of the nation. The attempt made by an unripe student on the life of the King of Prussia, gave rise to the fear, that the hopes of the

German nation might again be retarded by another thirty years.

Directly after the miserable deed, the King himself drew up a statement of what had happened. I do not know whether this document was immediately published at the time, or was only communicated to the Courts connected with Prussia. At any rate, it shall be preserved to memory here in its original form.

'As I was walking this day, the 14th of July, at half-past eight o'clock in the morning, in the Lichtenthal Avenue, a young man of about twenty years of age passed me from behind, and saluted me in a particularly friendly, and almost hearty, manner, taking off his hat and lowering it several times by way of greeting. As he soon afterwards slackened his pace, I passed him once more, when he saluted me again. This happened a few paces in front of, and behind, the house in which the painter von Beyer formerly resided. At the chain-bridge, I was met by my Ambassador Count Flemming, who then accompanied me. Perhaps 150 paces beyond the little shepherd's cottage, a shot was fired, so close behind me, that I immediately felt a pain on the left side of the neck, and a buzzing in my head, and at once put my hand to the injured spot, exclaiming: "Good heavens, what was that!" Count Flemming and I turned round at the same time, and I saw the above-mentioned young man standing quite calmly three paces behind us. Count Flemming asked him: "Who shot here? Did you shoot?" Whereupon the man answered quite coolly: "I shot at the King." Count Flemming then seized him by the collar and detained him, asking: "What did you shoot with?" He pointed to an umbrella, which he had thrown on the grass, and a few paces off lay a double-barrelled pocket-pistol, both barrels of which had been fired. As a gentleman, who is said to be the advocate Süpfle from Gernsbach, and another man, the deputy-administrator referendary Schill from Achern, immediately ran up and threw the young man on the ground, exclaiming: "This is a disgrace and a dishonour to Baden, the people must revenge it." Count Flemming found time to pick up the pistol and

the umbrella. Meanwhile, the hotel-keeper Brandt from Berlin had come up, and these three gentlemen took the man to a hackney-carriage which was just passing by. I requested the gentlemen not to do him any harm, and ordered them to transport him, under the escort of Count Flemming, to the city-director Kunz. A fourth gentleman, M. Blanquet, merchant from Paris, told me in French, that the collar of my coat had been torn by a bullet, and that my necktie had likewise been grazed. I took it off, and convinced myself that the statement was correct. The contusion on the neck did not bleed, but caused a slight burning pain. I could therefore continue my walk towards Lichtenthal, and from there returned home on foot with the Queen.

(Signed) 'WILLIAM.

'BADEN-BADEN, *the 14th of July*, 1861, 11 A.M.'

When I heard of Becker's nefarious deed, I was just about to prepare for a journey to Ostende. A few days before, the foundation of the rifle-guild had taken place in Gotha, and I feared, like everybody else, that the national movement itself might be made answerable for the crime in Baden-Baden.

In the meantime, I telegraphed to the King, and sent my aide-de-camp, Herr von Reuter, to Baden-Baden, with a letter in which I gave expression to my innermost feelings. The answer which the King gave me on the 16th of August, (July ?) encouraged me to hope that the monarch's way of thinking had not been altered in any material sense. Still, the circumstances in which the atrocious crime had been committed, were sufficiently suspicious in a political respect, to render it only too intelligible, if the King now took a rather harsher view of the German popular tendencies.

'Only a few words of thanks'—King William wrote to me on the 16th of August (July ?), still with a somewhat shaky hand—'since I am not to write much, and von Reuter is to leave at once. Your great kindness in writing, telegraphing, and sending me an Ambassador, I acknowledge with a grateful heart.

'Divine mercy has saved me from assassination. May this heinous deed serve as a hint, that nothing should be precipitated. The culprit declared in writing, *before* the act, that, since I was not doing enough for the unity of Germany, I must be murdered. This is plain, but somewhat drastic.

'Once more a thousand thanks,

'Yours, etc.,

'WILLIAM'

My brother, too, entertained the fear, that endeavours would be made to derive advantage from the attempt in a reactionary sense. However, he received more reassuring impressions of the King's personal mode of thinking, for the Crown Prince of Prussia, who was then staying in Osborne, had immediately hastened to Baden-Baden on receipt of the news of what had occurred there, and had just as speedily returned. Referring to a description of the rifle-fête in Gotha, which I had sent to my brother a short time before, he answered on the 21st of July:

'Your description of the rifle-fête in Gotha interested me very much. It seems to have been a perfect success, and must have been very interesting, though rather disquieting for you. For one never knows how that sort of thing falls out.

'The abominable attempt in Baden is sure to be brought into connection with the German patriotic endeavours and movements, and people are not wanting, who positively declare that they are bound to lead to such crimes, since they incite and stir up the people, and more particularly the youth. Notwithstanding, I hope a difference will be shown between now and 1818, and the incident will not serve the Government, like the murder of Kotzebue did, as a pretext for persecuting young people generally.

'There is just now no domineering Russia, no all-powerful Metternich in Austria, no Bourbons of the older branch in France, etc., and the King of Prussia appears to be taking the matter like a soldier, and not like a tyrant of Syracuse. Moreover, he is surrounded by the best society in Baden, and the feudalists are defying him.

'I am more alarmed by Napoleon's attempts to bring about interviews, both in Chalons and at the Prussian manœuvres, which he will ultimately succeed in.

'Fritz has safely returned to us. He travelled from Osborne to Baden in twenty-eight hours, and it took him no longer coming back. Farewell, dear Ernest, may the baths in Ostende do you good.

'Ever your faithful brother,

'ALBERT.'

Soon afterwards, news was also received from Berlin, that the King would not let himself be diverted from the political attitude he had hitherto observed. I was assured, that all the efforts of the reactionary party had no prospect of gaining the upperhand in Berlin, and that the endeavours to make capital out of the atrocious attempt had been universally repelled.

The proceedings which were instituted by the Ministry against a provincial functionary, who, in an official edict, had made the Liberal party responsible for the crime, produced a reassuring effect. Indeed, Prince Hohenzollern, as long as he remained in office, afforded the best guarantee against the onset of the feudal clique, which, for the present, was still strongly forced into the background. It was only gradually, when the King proceeded to his coronation in Königsberg, with symptoms of a strong predilection for somewhat obsolete forms, that a few circles gathered fresh courage and not unfounded hopes for a change of things in Prussia and Germany.

However, before I proceed to relate these matters, I have to mention two events which occurred in England during this period, and caused a great impression, both there and in Germany.

On the 16th of March, 1861, our aunt Victoria, the mother of the Queen of England, died in Frogmore. She had nearly reached the age of seventy-five. Owing to the sincere attachment of the English Royal Family to this excellent lady, and the active intercourse which they had always kept up with her, a great gap was caused by her death, which nobody could feel more deeply than my brother. The Duchess of Kent was

a lady of profound sentiment and warm benevolence, and as, in her difficult position after the marriage of the Queen, she never lent her hand to Court intrigues, she remained until the last a true motherly friend to my brother. Hence, he looked upon the death of our aunt as isolating him in England, and, when in a melancholy mood, he expressed the wish that he might soon follow her.

Indeed, as if he had had a presentiment of how short a thread of life had been meted out to him, he was continually engrossed with the desire of securing a home for his eldest son, the foundation of which he would gladly have laid himself. Pains were taken to select a suitable wife for the Prince of Wales, and one day I received the news, that the choice had fallen upon Princess Alexandra of Denmark, the daughter of the subsequent King Christian IX.

The Princess of Denmark belonged to the greatest beauties of the young world of Europe, and her personal qualities were of so eminent a kind, that one could have wished that horrid politics had nothing to do with marriages in sovereign families.

However, as things stood between Germany and Denmark, an event like the betrothal of the Prince of Wales with a Danish Princess, could not but act in Germany like a clap of thunder. By all patriotic politicians, the matter was looked upon, as if my brother had deserted the cause he had fought for so long and so earnestly.

Nor could this fact be evaded in the correspondence between myself and my brother, and, although he agreed with my view, that the betrothal was not quite in harmony with the German political tendency which he had advocated, still, I had to admit, on my part, that, as to the person of the bride, no happier choice could have been made for the Prince of Wales.

Meanwhile, the stirring year 1861 was drawing to an end, and, before its close, seemed about to bring a world of misfortune and disaster upon me and the whole house of Coburg. I had hardly returned to Coburg from the Tyrol, towards the middle of November, when the news of the death of King

Pedro of Portugal shocked everybody in Europe. During his short reign, this youthful monarch had given the strongest proofs of great and statesmanlike qualities, and had acquired the highest esteem of all discerning politicians, who knew of the difficult state of affairs prevailing in Portugal for half a century. He was now carried off, in the prime of his age, on the 11th of November 1861.

I had had occasion, for years, to marvel at the profound knowledge of my Royal nephew, who, with the thoroughness of a German statistician, from time to time sent me accounts of the position of Portugal in memorandums which I still preserve. He possessed a clear judgment, and a firm faith in the future of his country, whose circumstances had undergone a complete change, since he had assumed the reins of government. Generally speaking, it may be said that he brought the epoch of revolutionary convulsions to a close, under which the country had suffered throughout half a century.

Nobody was more moved by the death of our gifted Portuguese nephew, than my brother, who, in several letters, gave a touching expression to his grief. But no one could have foretold that a few weeks later Prince Albert himself would follow the young King into the grave.

The last days of my poor brother's life were wrapped in a certain mystery for me. As the reader of my Memoirs will have observed in more than one place, there was at times a kind of pride noticeable in the character of my richly and gloriously gifted brother, which prevented him from sharing his deepest feelings with others, and giving expression to his mental, or even physical, sufferings. The more nervous he felt himself, the greater grew the reticence with which he avoided bringing his sufferings to the knowledge of those who could have remedied them. Only thus was it possible for him to be dangerously ill for weeks, without his surroundings really noticing it. Tormented by creeping attacks of fever, he suffered the usual routine of his activity to be so little disturbed, that the English physicians only delivered their opinions very late. It was not until the end was near, that the days of his typhoid malady were begun to be counted

from a moment, which proved that it might perhaps have been contended with sooner. *

It was several weeks since I had received any direct news from my brother. A few days before the catastrophe, the Duchess was informed from England, that Prince Albert had taken cold a fortnight before, and was suffering from rheumatic pains and loss of appetite. Englishmen, it was said, called this sort of thing 'feverish colds.' But it was of no consequence, and we were on no account to let the Queen see that we were anxious, or to write in that sense, as she was not to take the slightest alarm.

On the 10th and 12th of December, it was reported that the physicians were quite satisfied with the course the illness was taking, whilst anxious laymen in the Prince's suite added: '*pour dire la vérité*, his state is still the same, and very little change has taken place.'

Even on the 13th of December, when the reports already mentioned the patient's difficulty in breathing, the matter was still said to be of no consequence. In these forced illusions the Prince's next surroundings indulged, as well as the more distant world.

When I received the first news of the real state of the matter, my brother's life only counted a few hours more. I shall never forget the moment when the unhappy tidings reached me. The pessimistic view which I had taken of the matter from the very outset, may have been caused by the last impressions which my brother's extremely nervous condition had produced upon me, the year before, during his stay in Coburg.† The reader will remember that our old friend

* Since not everybody has Martin's book at hand, I think I should here insert the passage from the Queen's diary, according to which the commencement of the fever was subsequently reckoned by the doctors to date from the 22nd of November: On the 1st of December, until when he had taken part in daily affairs, he wrote his memorandum on the Trent affair. On the 6th of December, the Queen's diary (Martin V. 431) contains the following entry: The doctors declared: that they had all along been watching their patient's state suspecting fever, but unable to judge what it might be, and how to treat him, until that morning . . . that the fever must have its course, viz. a month, dating from the beginning, which he (the doctor in attendance) considers to have been the day Albert went to Sandhurst, the 22nd of November, or possibly sooner; that he was not alarmed, and that there were no bad symptoms, but he could not be better, until the fever left him . . . Albert himself was not to know it, as he unfortunately had a horror of fever, etc.

† See vol. IV, p. 55.

Stockmar, too, had not spoken without anxiety of the Prince's health. These circumstances may have worked together, whilst I was at a distance, and without accurate knowledge of the situation, in filling my mind involuntarily with sad forebodings.

On the 14th of December, I went with Prince Edward of Leiningen to Mönchroden to hunt. It was a gloomy day. The winter had not yet held its full entry into our mountains, and a lukewarm wind was thawing the scanty covering of snow in the park. Whilst I was awaiting the *battue* from my stand, soon after noon, I heard footsteps close by, and immediately the thought rose up within me, that news of death was coming. Directly afterwards, I saw a messenger from the town, who gave me the impression of hurry and excitement.

The news he brought, did not speak the dreaded words, but it sounded so hopeless, that it could be supposed that perhaps at that moment all was over in the distant Royal Castle of Windsor. We hastened home, and spent an evening full of despair. A ray of hope still deceived us, seeing that up to midnight no further message had arrived. In vain! My brother had died peacefully, at a quarter to nine o'clock in the evening.

Towards morning, the telegraph uttered the merciless words. Since my father's death, I had not seen a day dawn like this one. In the closer family circle, I alone was left behind, and all who from childhood upwards could be called mine in the most familiar sense of the term, had been snatched away from me. Just as, in early years I had lost my father and my mother, so was I now, a childless man, destined to see my only brother die in the prime of life.

In the morning, I went to Stockmar, who was already in possession of various particulars of the Prince's illness, but who still found most of them quite inexplicable. He, too, had been informed that the doctors dated the beginning of his severe illness from the 22nd of November, whilst it was at the same time certain that the Prince had really only been laid up and treated as a patient the very last days. Subsequently, it transpired too, that, in the first weeks of December, the Prince

had still been extremely busy with difficult State and family affairs.

Whilst Stockmar seemed not disinclined to conclude from Prince Albert's character, which we were only too well acquainted with, that his typhous malady had been somewhat neglected, he discussed the fearfully tragic aspect of the case in a manner arguing rare greatness and strength of mind. Striving to find consolation, he spoke of the remarkable completeness with which it had been vouchsafed to my brother, to consummate, in a shorter space of time than other mortals, a singularly harmonious life, in such wise, that he had attained all that greatness which ensures him his place in history, at a far quicker pace than is usually the case. Thus, then, he had sooner cast off the troubles of an existence, which, broken off at a moment of the greatest success, would still make the impression of a noble work of art on the following generations!

There was a power which I shall never forget, in the words of my friend, who was himself bowed down with grief, and who, standing on the decline of life, gave such beautiful expression to his great views of life and life's calling.

Meanwhile, time urged on to decide as to the next future. Business and official receptions filled up my days, until the 17th of December, when I made the necessary preparations, in order to reach England in time for the Prince's funeral.

When I arrived in Gotha, on the 18th of December, a summons from the Prussian Court reached me, requesting me to come to Berlin before my departure, in order to take messages from the King and the Queen. I had therefore to repair to Berlin in all haste, and was awaited at the station by the Crown Prince and Princess. My heartrending meeting with the Crown Princess, who was prostrate with grief, baffles description, for there was never in any family a more beautiful and faithful love, than that which existed between my brother and his eldest daughter. One could hardly believe that this noble tie had been severed!

The next day, on the 20th, I travelled *via* Brussels to Calais and London, accompanied by my Belgian cousins, whom

I had met on the way. We had a fearfully stormy passage to Dover, and the season seemed bent on spreading all its horrors over the sea-girt kingdom. A special train was in waiting at Dover, which was to take me direct to Portsmouth, as the Queen had gone to the Isle of Wight. In spite of the raging storm, I was obliged to embark on the Queen's yacht in Portsmouth, and, since we were not to enter the harbour of Cowes, but were to disembark in the open road, below the palace, I had to land in a boat, whilst the waves were at their highest. It was midnight when I entered the palace, drenched to the skin.

The Queen had arranged to meet me without witnesses on the staircase, and thus I found the unhappy woman, bowed down with grief, and utterly prostrate, in the stillness of the night, which was interrupted by nothing but the loud grief which deprived us both of words.

On the 23rd of December, the provisional interment of my brother's remains took place at the entry to the Royal Family Vault,* and I therefore left for Windsor in the early morning. I abstain from describing these sad ceremonies with all their grief, but I will mention how dreadful it was to me, that I could not be spared from taking part in the pompous banquet which, according to immemorial Court etiquette, followed directly upon the touching funeral ceremony.

It was years before I could get over the recollection of all the contrasts which forced themselves upon me on that day. Of the Queen's family, I had nobody at my side, except the Prince of Wales. The more comforting was the sympathy of the Orleans family, hardly a member of which had remained absent.

The same evening, I returned to Osborne, where I remained until the 28th. I was a witness there of the tremendous sympathy which the entire English nation showed to the Royal Family in their misfortune, whilst I, at the same time spent the saddest Chrimastide that I can remember.

* My brother, as is well-known, lies in the Royal Mausoleum erected by the Queen in Frogmore, whither his body was transferred on the 18th of December, 1862.

It was remarkable that my brother, whose life was so restless and full of difficulties, seemed to be pursued on to his very death-bed by the worst of political storms. Before he had descended into his grave, the interest of the English world and the English Court was divided between him and the great American conflict which had just broken out.

From the beginning of December, the anxiety about the dying Prince was mingled with the fear that a war with the New World was imminent. On the 8th of November, the English steamer *Trent* had been overtaken and searched by the American man-of-war *San Jacinto*. The neutral flag of England had been violated, and several passengers from the Confederate States of South America arrested and carried off by officers of the man-of-war.

Tremendous excitement was caused throughout the whole of Old England, and it was one of my brother's last acts, to exert a moderating influence on the decisions of the Queen's Cabinet. He managed so well to modify the fierce tone of the Notes against America, that the conflict lost its war-like character. But, at the bier of the noble Prince, there still rose up the threatening spectre of a murderous war between two nations, which he thought he had appeased.

While I was staying in Osborne with the Royal Family, during the days of mourning, the anxiety and the danger of war appeared directly before the eyes of Her Britannic Majesty. A powerful American man-of-war anchored, without showing its flag, just opposite Osborne. The intention was apparently to threaten the Queen, and the guards of the palace were reinforced. Two English frigates cruised in front of the island, and gradually everything assumed a war-like aspect. At any moment, some unforeseen incident, such as would have been nothing new in the English navy, might have been followed by the most dreadful consequences.

In these anxious days of a severe conflict, we mourned for the Prince in the quiet family circle, with the feeling that his loss was just as irreparable for the great affairs of the nations, as for his nearest belongings.

In the last days of the year 1861, I returned, sick in body

and in mind, to my dear native country. The stormy sea, which used otherwise to be so dangerous to me, had this time scarcely any power over me. Innumerable visions of the past rose up before me, from the moment when I crossed the channel for the first time with my beloved brother, to the awful ceremonies amid which he had now been lowered into the grave. I was told how, in his last delirium, he had lived in his native land, and thought he heard the birds of the Rosenau singing; and now he lay at rest for ever in the distant kingdom!

For me, too, there seemed but few hopes remaining in this life; perhaps, indeed, all ties of friendship had really been loosened. With such grief at heart, I landed at Calais, and arriving, after a short rest in Paris, in the morning of New Year's Eve in Gotha, and in the evening in Coburg, I sought comfort and strength in my sad meeting with the Duchess. We had, as scarcely ever before, every reason to wish ourselves a happier New Year.

CHAPTER IV

THE REVOLUTION IN GREECE.—CANDIDATURE OF PRINCE ALFRED.—THE GREEK CROWN OFFERED TO DUKE ERNEST.—LETTER FROM KING LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM.—THE DUKE'S ANSWER.—OTHER CANDIDATES.—LORD PALMERSTON'S MEMORANDUM.—THE QUESTION OF PRINCE ALFRED'S SUCCESSION TO THE SAXON DUCHIES.—KING LEOPOLD'S MEMORANDUM ON GREEK AFFAIRS.—THE DUKE'S CONDITIONS.—NEGOTIATIONS IN BRUSSELS.—BAVARIA IS OFFENDED.—LORD RUSSELL OPPOSES THE DUKE'S PROPOSALS.—GENERAL GREY'S MINUTE OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE DUKE.—ENGLAND OBJECTS TO A REGENCY.—PRINCE ALFRED DECLARED KING BY THE GREEK NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.—PRINCE WILLIAM OF DENMARK ELECTED.—LETTER FROM QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE DUKE.—THE DUKE'S REPLY.—WEDDING OF THE PRINCE OF WALES.—THE DUKE IN LONDON AND PARIS.—THE EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH AND THE POLES.—THE DUKE IN BRUSSELS.

THE year 1862 closed with a revolution in the far south-east of Europe, which seemed to open up the Eastern Question afresh. Whilst the King and Queen of Greece had started, on the 13th of October, on a tour in the Peloponnesus, it came to risings in Bonizza, Patras, and Athens, and to the establishment of a Provisional Government, at the head of which stood the senator Bulgaris, the Admiral Kanaris, and Rufos, the Chief of the Provisional Government of Patras.

The first decree of this national Government contained the laconic statement: Otto's kingdom is done away with: Queen Amalia's vice-regency is done away with; a Provisional Government is established; a constituent National Assembly will at once be called, in order to form the Government, and to choose a new sovereign.

Before people in Europe could ascertain anything of a

definite nature with regard to these events, they were surprised by the further news, that King Otto was on his homeward journey to Bavaria, and had taken leave of the Greeks in a proclamation couched rather in sentimental than in political terms. However, there was no mention of a renunciation of the Greek crown, either in respect of the person of the King, or of the Bavarian house, and, since it was an English vessel in which Otto and his consort sailed from Salamis to Triest, public opinion in Germany was very much inclined to look upon the whole thing as a concocted plan on the part of the English Cabinet.

This opinion was, moreover, supported by the circumstance, that Prince Alfred's candidature for the throne had immediately been started in Greece, and that a sudden enthusiasm had arisen for the still so youthful son of the English Queen, such as could hardly be comprehended, except through the influence of English friends of Greece.

I am far from wishing to discuss here the causes which led to the catastrophe of the Bavarian dynasty in Greece, or to describe the gradual fall of the King. In Munich, the event was naturally felt as a great offence. Old King Louis beheld in it the collapse of a position of his house which, in the enthusiasm of his younger years, he had struggled for with the greatest sacrifices, and which had always filled him with a certain ideal pride.

In the movement of the Greeks, since the time of the Crimean war, there was undoubtedly the expression of a national idea, which the needy little State was not able to realise. The never-ending cry for extension of the Greek frontier only afforded the Protecting Powers the desired opportunity of incessantly interfering in the internal affairs of the country, and the slightest rising, as well as the most insignificant military mutiny, had, for some time, always assumed the character of a foreign complication.

Moreover, a strong personal dislike, which prevailed in high political circles in England against the Greek Court, left the Turkish Embassy at all times free to spin all sorts of successful intrigues; nor were the harsh dealings of English

diplomacy towards its proteges on the different thrones erected by it, modified and adjusted, as in other cases, by relations of friendship between the crowned heads themselves. There may have been a good deal to find fault with in Otto's Government. But, how utterly inadequate the foundation of the Greek State itself was, such as it had been created by the European Powers, could now no longer be denied. In this respect, the downfall of Otto's kingdom was a great confirmation of the views and predictions of my uncle and my father, both of whom had declined the Greek throne upon the very grounds, from which the fall of the Bavarian dynasty now resulted.

My father, as the reader will remember from the earlier portion of my Memoirs, had condemned the outer and inner basis of the Greek kingdom still more positively, perhaps, than my uncle. A generation had been sacrificed to preserve a State which was alike too small and too great, and which was cut off from almost every means of internal development. The question now was, whether the European Great Powers, England at their head, had gained better judgment.

As a matter of fact, they now showed themselves willing to repair their old mistake, to some extent, by the incorporation of the Ionian Islands. It was soon after King Otto's fall, that this idea arose in official English circles. By this dowry of the ocean-ruling nation, a new King could no doubt obtain some footing among the Greeks. However, the doubt still continued, whether the English Cabinet was inclined to put the Greek kingdom on its own legs.

When the matter was at this stage, the Greek crown was offered to me, without the slightest forewarning, or previous negotiations, as if it were the hereditary fate of the House of Coburg, and, before the close of the year 1862, I was placed before the cruel alternative, of either offering my person as a sacrifice, or for ever putting a stop to the repeated offers made to our House, of a crown which had, perhaps, a rich future in store for it.

It will be conceived, that this situation was no easy one, and that I could not act in the matter according to mere

inclination. I was entirely wrapped up in the development of Germany. I had the conviction that the time was not far off, when the destiny of our Fatherland would at last be fulfilled. I had followed this great process from its origin, and had taken an active part in it. Hence, I found it hard to bear the thought, that, when at last the hoped for better times for our German Fatherland arrived, I myself should, in a manner, have renounced it.

However, in spite of all personal sacrifices, I should nevertheless have been inclined to undertake a grand and honourable political task, if, after a sharp criticism, I had been able to gain the conviction, that the possibility of attaining happier results in that kingdom than the former Government had achieved, was really furnished and afforded by the Great Powers.

My uncle in Brussels, on the other hand, as was to be expected, had maintained a stubborn sympathy with the Greek cause, and it seemed as if this new departure in the distant country had filled him with youthful interest and re-awakening philhellenism. Although he had at all times, and thus also in latter days, followed the political events in Greece with great practical intelligence, he nevertheless expressed himself much surprised at the rapid decisions of King Otto.

At the outbreak of the revolution, he had surmised, that the King would scarcely be able to maintain his position much longer. Yet, on the 1st of December, he still said: 'The Greek affair has been settled in an incomprehensibly rapid way, and it is now an *embarras* of no slight kind. The desire to make the acquisition of Alfred was very intelligible. They thought by this means to get a great deal of English money, and no doubt also the Ionian Islands. However, it would have involved great complications for England. Had not Wellington and Aberdeen wantonly spoilt the matter in 1830, I might have succeeded. Now it is much more difficult.'

Indeed, Prince Alfred's candidature for the throne met only too soon with the opposition of Russia, and, if my uncle seemed inclined to attribute the enthusiasm of the Hellenes for the son of the Queen to very substantial reasons, it was

certainly remarkable that, for the Duke of Leuchtenberg, whose candidature was favoured by Russia and France, scarcely any party could be gained at all in Greece itself. On the 4th of December, it was agreed in London, that there could be no further question of the candidature of any Prince who belonged to the great ruling houses. The old treaties were renewed, by which the ruling families of the three Protecting Powers were to remain expressly and in like manner excluded from the Greek throne.

In the difficulty into which the English Government had got, the worst part seemed to be its desire to re-establish a Royal government in Greece as speedily as possible, it might almost be said in the twinkling of an eye. For, whoever might determine to accept this thorny crown, no sovereign with any political intelligence could rush headlong and unconditionally into the adventure. The idea, therefore, of selecting our cousin, King Ferdinand, for the place which was inaccessible to Prince Alfred, was not exactly a very promising one.

No doubt, this personage, who, in his earliest youth, had stepped into a similarly difficult position in Portugal, and had maintained himself there with the greatest distinction, would have been better adapted than any other, to ascend the Greek throne with honour. But a rich experience left hardly a doubt in King Ferdinand's mind, that nothing was more risky, than to be too dependent upon English diplomacy in a foreign country. Besides, the suspicion easily suggested itself, that, after the sudden death of King Pedro, various members of the English Government would not think it exactly undesirable to remove from Lisbon an experienced and not always pliable counsellor of the new government.

Under these circumstances, King Ferdinand could only have been prevailed upon to leave his Portuguese retreat, if he had been afforded sufficient guarantees of independent power. The English Government, on the other hand, wanted quick and devoted decisions, and thought it could instal a new King in the Greek empire within a few weeks, just as, when a Viceroy leaves Bengal, a substitute is found.

Under such conditions, King Ferdinand declined the pro-

posal in the most positive form. 'It will interest you,' King Leopold wrote to me on the 24th of December, 'to hear how matters stand with Ferdinand. This candidature was invented in England. I feared from the beginning, that Ferdinand would not accept it. In his place, I would *secure* the Portuguese position, and accept the thing as a *voyage pittoresque*, with the intention of soon appointing a substitute, in case things should turn out unpleasant. That is the only sensible way of trying the thing. In my time, I had all my English prospects reserved to me; the Portuguese ought to do the same for Ferdinand. But he himself will not be willing. Since they urged it in England, I sent J. Devaux, von Pradt's nephew, to Lisbon. I intended my arguments to make an impression. I even went so far as to say that the beauty of the Levantine women was known to be very great!'

However, when King Leopold wrote this, they had already been obliged in London to let the Portuguese candidature drop, and, with the swiftness of the wind, had seized on a new idea. A few days later, King Leopold made himself the mediator of this idea in a letter which was bound to be decisive for my own person. I myself was now suddenly placed in the foreground of the question, and proclaimed candidate for the throne of Greece. The King wrote:

'LAEKEN, *the 25th of December*, 1862.

'MY DEAR ERNEST,—The reason of my to-day's letter is the Greek affair. It was originally influenced by the Duke of Wellington and Aberdeen, and totally ruined by the views Metternich then entertained. The connection of these things, you will find in the newest part of Gervinus, who, in his sixth volume, had said the strangest things.* But poor Otto really had a great deal to complain of.

'Such as Greece was made, it could hardly be undertaken. With the Ionian Islands, matters look better, and, if I could shake off twenty years of my age, I would undertake the

*The King himself afterwards caused the correction, which Gervinus made in his 7th volume, p. 745. Cf vol. i., p. 6. with the reference to the article in the Deutsche Revue of June, 1884, 'King Leopold as a Critic.'

management of things there, since there is after all the prospect of a great future, even without Constantinople.

'No one would be more adapted to carry out something of the kind with courage and energy, *than you*. I had already mentioned this before; and now Lord Russell has written to me, to ascertain what your views may be. Kindly let me know what you think of the matter. The great wish in England, and apparently in Greece, is, that the future Chief should belong to our family.

'The idea is not altogether to be rejected, that somebody should arrange the matter there, and then furnish a substitute.

'However that may be, I would ask you to express your views to me, and I will wait with my answer to Lord Russell until then. If possible, the chosen one is to be a Protestant. Ferdinand is only a Protestant in one sense, viz., inasmuch as he protests very much against abandoning his *dolce far niente*.

'A new year is at the door; may it prove a very happy one for you and Alexandrine. And now farewell, and be good enough to give me a reply. My dear Ernest,

'Your faithful old uncle,

'LEOPOLD.'

I did not fail to give my uncle the desired answer as soon as possible, and, even now, I think I could not expound the standpoint I took up towards this surprising proposal, more calmly, than with the words I then wrote:

'MOST GRACIOUS UNCLE,—For your kind lines, which I received yesterday morning, my best thanks. At this moment, however, it is still impossible for me to answer with so positive a Yes or No, that real negotiations could be commenced. The reason is plausible, as I have hitherto been far from imagining that I myself might be called upon to put an end to the confusion in that unhappy country, and build up a new, and perhaps powerful, kingdom. Since poor Albert's death, I have unfortunately only been kept acquainted with the current greater political affairs by the newspapers, whereas I

was formerly, after all, pretty accurately informed, and could now and then, too, express my views. Hence, I am entirely in the dark in respect of Greek affairs, as they now stand, and have stood in latter times. I would therefore ask you, before writing you anything more definite, and before expressing a more decided opinion concerning my own person, to be kind enough to answer me a few questions, and to enable me, perhaps by a brief memorandum, to gain an insight into the real causes that rendered it impossible for King Otto to remain in his position.

'I would ask:

'1. What do France, Russia, and Austria, think of the future of Greece?

'2. Will they be able to unite in one common view?

'3. Do they really intend to give that country new vitality, by a change of its frontier and larger subsidies, or do they only mean to have a temporary Regent, in order, for the moment, to prevent the proclamation of the republic?

'4. How are the relations to the Porte to be regulated?

'5. What is the real will of the Greek population? In what parties is it divided, and how do they differ from one another?

'6. Is it possible to treat with a Prince, before King Otto has first abdicated?

'All these are questions, upon which anybody will surely require to be satisfied, who has the prospect offered him of managing that State, in whatever position it may be, before he can arrive at any kind of decided opinion on the subject.

'I believe that if the will of an earnest man, and the energy of one experienced in affairs, are necessary anywhere, they will be a primary condition in that country. I agree too, with you, that it is desirable that our house should not lose the opportunity of obtaining a firm footing in a quarter of the globe, which has probably still a great future before it.

'Take these lines in good part, dear uncle. I have never entered thoughtlessly into any matter, nor have I hitherto ever undertaken anything, that I was not capable of carrying out. I must therefore see clear, before I can judge.

'If I am enabled to do this, I think I can possibly make some suggestions which may prove acceptable, both with regard to my own person, and with regard to the success of the whole matter.

'I may presume, that only you and Lord Russell know of the idea concerning myself? The occupant of this future position, however, must, in my humble opinion, be not only one who is given by the Great Powers, but one chosen by the nation itself.'

'Yours, etc.,

'ERNEST.

'GOTHA, *January* 3, 1863.'

Meanwhile, Lord Palmerston, in a very noteworthy memorandum to the Queen, had officially put me forward as candidate, and immediately received her Majesty's assent.

Palmerston declared, that he took the greatest interest in supporting and making use of the favourable feeling of the Greeks towards England. Everything, he said, depended on finding the right candidate for the throne, as the Kingdom might otherwise be endangered by imprudent agitations. The conditions of a good candidature for the Greek throne were manifold. The person to be chosen must neither be connected with Russia, nor with France, either by birth or by marriage, else the Court of Greece would become a centre of intrigue against Austria, or Turkey, or against both, and at the same time a source of animosity towards English interests in the Mediterranean. For this reason, it was necessary that Prince William of Baden, as well as the Duke d'Aumale, should be excluded.

In like manner, Lord Palmerston would not admit the candidature of a young and inexperienced Prince, because he would be too easily exposed to Foreign influence. In fact, he made it a positive condition, that the candidate put forward must be a man with administrative experience, and of liberal constitutional principles, both of which included the condition of mature age. The intimate connection of such a man with Her Majesty's Kingdom was regarded by the Greeks them-

selves as so necessary, that some of them even advocated the absurd idea of offering their crown to some English nobleman, since it could not be accepted by Prince Alfred.

'Under all these circumstances'—it goes on to say in Lord Palmerston's memorandum—'and in view of all these considerations, Viscount Palmerston begs to say, that the choice of Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg is the best, both for England and for Greece, and that if he is willing to accept the proposal, the Greeks must at once be won over to it.'

The difficulties, however, which this arrangement brought with it, were not overlooked, and Lord Palmerston discussed the question of Prince Alfred's immediate succession to the Duchy of Coburg with laudable freedom from bias. But, as he appeared to see that it would be impossible for me once for all to cede my rights of government in Germany, the English Minister knew of nothing better to suggest, than a series of provisional arrangements, in Greece as well as in Germany. But, that the English Government ought to surround the crown of Greece with such guarantees as would have rendered its acceptance inviting and promising, of this, Lord Palmerston's memorandum made least mention of all.

However, the Queen was at once quite won over to the project. In her answer, she acknowledged the great force of Palmerston's arguments, and expressed herself greatly pleased that one of her relatives should be called to undertake so great a task. In a letter to King Leopold, she dwelt with the friendliest sentiments upon the establishment of a new Royal branch of the house of Coburg, which might be founded by adoption, whilst the possession of Coburg would now fall to her son Alfred.

It was natural that my uncle took a more statesmanlike view of the matter, and was convinced, from the outset, that, unless a substantially satisfactory solution of the whole question were effected, his nephew would scarcely possess the necessary ambition to pursue the phantom of Royal fortune in the far East. He endeavoured, therefore, above all, to answer the questions I had addressed to him, in a letter which

may be found interesting even at the present time, as containing a sketch of the whole political situation.

'LAEKEN, *4th January*, 1863.

'Your faithful Lamouche has just arrived, and I shall send him back again to-morrow with the express train. The idea with Ferdinand would only have been possible, if his Portuguese position had been quite independent. It arose in England, and did *not* proceed from me. When I was consulted, I at once declared that, in my opinion, you would be in every respect the most suitable person. Victoria, however, had been rather too quick in writing to Ferdinand, and the Cabinet requested me to support the matter. I have done so honestly, but have given him a true account of everything. In my opinion, he could only undertake it, as *un voyage pittoresque*, for a short time, and with full security for his Portuguese position. That security, however, does not exist, as I thought it did, and as would have been the case with me, since my revenues were entirely safeguarded. It was probably the Garibaldian doings, that gave Otto the first shock. Still, his being entirely abandoned, proves how unfortunately the Bavarians have managed the whole affair.

'Directly after the Revolution, a passionate leaning towards England was manifested, which proved itself in the election of Alfred. It was impossible that Alfred could accept with any consistency.

'Thus the election was declined. But the copy of Palmerston's letter proves how greatly the Greeks insist on having a sovereign, who is in close connection with England. The moment Ferdinand refused, the English Cabinet, and even Victoria, who had at first been adversely inclined, on account of Coburg, turned to *you*, which, I own, gives me great pleasure.

'Now, after this preamble, to your questions. 1. France, the most important element after England, has placed the matter entirely in England's hands. Russia would have liked to have Leuchtenberg, but has also joined England. Austria, which was the chief cause that Wellington and Aberdeen spoilt

the thing for me, likewise desires that only English influence should reign in Greece. This, too, is entirely in her interest, especially if, as has now been done, the Ionian Islands are ceded by England, which is a matter of the greatest importance to the Adriatic. Prussia and the other States are not likely to have any objections to raise against your election, and, being my nephew, you will inspire even the Turks with confidence.

'2. The Powers who originally negotiated with me—England, France, and Russia,—are, in a measure, forced to agree, on account of their former protocol. Austria voted in the matter, *in omnibus*, like England.

'3. The cession of the Ionian Islands, which has already been declared by England, provided she is satisfied with the new sovereign, is a great thing. They won't hear of a republic in England, nor are the Greeks themselves in favour of the idea of a republic. Cessions on the part of the Porte cannot be expected for the beginning. But the first thing to suggest itself in that respect, would be Candia, of which Admiral Malcolm always said to me: "The finest kingdom of the whole world."

'4. As I have already said, the immediate relations with the Porte *very good*. Nearly all the agents of the Porte are Greeks: Callimachus, Mussurus, and others.

'5. The real desire of the Greeks was, to have a sovereign who would be connected with the Great Powers, and more particularly with England. For this reason, Otto never satisfied them, for they are clever, and they found it little tempting to stand under Bavaria. The peasant merely saw the King, but the educated classes knew that he was after all isolated among the Great Powers. It was obviously not the business of any of the *Great* Powers to protect and support Otto. The fact that the Greeks knew this, did him great harm.

'6. About the parties, I shall gradually be able to give you more positive information. One thing I can say with a good conscience: there is national spirit in all of them; more, presumably, than in most nations. Russia has not gained ground in this respect; the inclination is for the West.

'7. The Powers, who originally entrusted me with the matter, believe themselves competent to recognise a new order of things, without Otto's abdication, by reason of his flight. However, it would perhaps be desirable that Otto should first abdicate.

'So far your questions. I will now tell you how *I* regard the matter:

'*a.* You are already a sovereign, and will remain one. Nothing of your German position must be resigned. You must remain in the position to discard them, not they you. If the arrogant English could digest five sovereigns of Hanover, all the more so the Greeks. Besides, three of the Hanoverians were really in the position of subjects to the German Empire.

'Alfred would be installed by you as Regent, and would obtain the position that George IV had for ten years, as Prince Regent. He would sign "in the name and behalf of H.R.H., etc." Alfred, when he is of age in England, would also have to get an English title, to which he has every right. The whole thing should be so arranged, that you, as sovereign, could at any moment do what suited you. With England's assent, I had arranged all my positions in such a way, that I could occupy them again at any moment; indeed, this is even now still the case.

'*b.* As to the country, I will gather every possible information. Nearly all the landed property used to belong to the Turks, and passed, before the constitution which was forced upon Otto, into the hands of the Royal Government. It has now been turned into State domains, consisting of arable land and not inconsiderable forests.

'*c.* With regard to the *liste civil*, I will ask for information. It is said, that the revenues of the State would this year amount to about twenty-five million francs: If sensibly managed, this ought to increase considerably.

'*d. Proportion gardée*, there are too many *quasi* gentlemen Greeks, and not enough peasants. The Greek population has been driven back by the Turks into mountainous positions, which are not favourable to agriculture. In my time, I was

advised to import some Bulgarian and Macedonian peasants, who are fond of husbandry.

'*e.* Commerce has already risen considerably. According to statements which are correct, the number of sailors is said to amount to thirty thousand. The trade in the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Adriatic, is entirely in their hands.

'*f.* There would be no lack of products, but the aptitude is wanting, and the communications are utterly neglected. Oil, silk, fruits, dyes, and wine, are among the principal objects.

'*g.* A country-seat would be desirable. I had thought of the slope of the Pentelicon, situated in the finest and healthiest position near Athens.

'*h.* The military system is not worth much The Gendarmerie is commended, and, for the beginning, it will be the most important arm.

'*i.* The climate, as is well-known, is very fine, and affords this advantage, that every conceivable temperature can be obtained, on account of the beautiful hills.

'*k.* To have only one neighbour, the Turks, is a great thing, and offers, after all, very powerful prospects for the future.

'*l.* The Greeks are not only of consequence in Greece, but everywhere, now even in England and France. They all have a strong national feeling; all beheld in me, thirty-two years ago, their chief, and they will now behold him in you. Otto's rule made all stay and commerce in Greece difficult for them, which was incredibly foolish.

'*m.* I will report in detail on the administration. The old form is the best; that of the commune governed by the so-called primates, or elders. This was my opinion, and that of one of the most able Greeks, Coletti, who has unfortunately died.

'*n.* Mavrocordatos, greatly devoted to England, is still alive. I will try and get you some statistics of all these people.

'*o.* I have already written to Russell, to prevent a Constitution being fabricated, without the sovereign's approbation. This is of the greatest importance. They say Otto was able

to get pretty well everything he wanted, from the representatives. Above all, the deputies ought not to be paid by the month, but by the session. The monthly payment makes everything difficult for us.

'*p.* The question of the succession ought to be arranged in the same fashion as Napoleon III arranged it, *i.e.*, that, failing direct descendants, the sovereign determines the adoption of a successor. This matter must remain in your hand.

'*q.* The religion is more a pretext, and was stirred up by Russia. However, they do not like the Catholics. The question had better be left dormant for the present. From you, as the present sovereign, nothing is required at all.

'*r.* How peculiar are the destinies of the children of the earth! Our beloved Albert had so great a desire for the Royal Title, and yet found it so difficult to accomplish. When Ferdinand became a King, they felt in England, that the thing was not quite suitable. At that time, perhaps, something in the style of William and Mary could have been effected, but the conditions were then different; besides, a Prince of Wales could not have been well set aside legally. This title is now offered to you, and with a far finer career. If I am still alive next winter, I shall come over on a visit, and may perhaps be of use.

'*s.* As you are the one sought after, you ought to secure your circle of activity, and keep the matter in your own hand till the last.

'*t.* In the year 1831, the Powers, at my request, guaranteed sixty million francs. We must see how this can be managed *without interest*, and by making small amortisation payments annually. A portion of the domains will serve as a mortgage. I will endeavour to suggest this. The old Greek loan was an imposition, without its parallel. A bank exists, and may do good business, as the rate of interest is very high.

'*u.* I subjoin: a copy of Palmerston's letter to the Queen, and her answer; also a paper, which I have intended as a correction for Gervinus, who has said things that are quite false, in the 6th part of his history. It may interest you, too.

If the English had granted the frontier from Volo to Arta, I should have been caught.

'Excuse my scribble, I am fearfully ailing. They will soon press you for a decided Yes or No in England. I hope my views will suit you. I shall be quite open with you as a business man. As a friend, I am so, as it is.

'Ever your faithful old uncle,

'LEOPOLD.

'*P.S.*—Be so good as to send me back the letters, but keep a copy. Victoria is greatly flattered that you are called to a throne.'

Kindly meant as were the communications of my uncle, they nevertheless failed to satisfy me. The intentions which the English harboured, and of which King Leopold had made himself the mediator, appeared to me to be neither personally nor substantially justified. How a beneficial rule was to be created in Athens, in face of the dissolution of the Greek army, and the pecuniary helplessness of the crown, was left as unclear, as the position which was to be reserved to me in my duchies.

I made the proposition, that I would go to Greece and assume the administration there, with the right of adopting one of the princes of our house as future King. Furnished with every Royal prerogative, I was willing to undertake the sovereign management of affairs as regent, until the moment arrived, when my successor was of age and fit to govern. My position in the German duchies was to be in no way altered. The government of these, during my absence, could be provided for according to the existing laws. For the regulation of Greek affairs, however, a series of conditions would have to be laid down, which the Great Powers would have to undertake to fulfil.

My uncle, however, was of opinion, that, for the present, there was not much to be expected in respect to the granting of further advantages to the Greek State. He thought particularly, that cessions on the part of Turkey were unobtainable.

The Powers, he said, were too much bound by the treaty of Paris, and it would be lost pains to make any proposition to them on that score. With regard to my personal demands, however, the King had a more favourable opinion, and thought it fair that I should not give up any of my rights in Germany. He cited, in support of my views, the relations of the Hanoverian dynasty in England and remarked, that even George IV often used to say: 'I shall go to Hanover, if they plague me too much.'

In the meantime, Lord Russell's answer to my enquiries arrived. He assured me, that the three Powers would positively recognise as King, whomever the Greeks elected, and, as to the election itself, England only required my consent in general, in order to effect it. The form of a regency, however, in which I was willing to assume the government, met with no favourable reception on the part of the English Cabinet, which was once of the opinion, that it was necessary to set to work quickly, and with accomplished facts.

This surely very extraordinary and peculiar haste in so important a matter, in which, moreover, the rights of Bavaria and King Otto had to be considered, appeared to render it highly necessary to discuss the matter personally. I therefore arranged a meeting with King Leopold for the 18th of January, at which also a delegate from England could be present. Under the pretext of a family visit, occasioned by the serious indisposition of the King, which, unfortunately, actually existed, a conference was arranged in Brussels, to which General Grey came on the part of England, and which I attended, with my Minister von Seebach, and my Councillor Samwer.

Before the meeting could take place, however, the whole project became public, in consequence of an indiscretion which has never been explained, and which created, in Bavaria especially, the most painful sensation. I was far from overlooking the fact that, in face of the inconsiderateness of the English Cabinet, the Bavarian Government was in its full right in insisting that no prejudicial decisions should be taken with regard to the throne of Greece. Indeed, both

in my first letter to King Leopold, and at the subsequent conferences, I had always urged the necessity of King Otto's abdication and consent. Still, Bavaria, was scarcely warranted in indulging in any illusions, as to what she could expect in this matter from the Great Powers.

One might have thought that the policy of the German Middle States had never had a better example offered them of the futility of their attempts at playing Great Powers, than in the case before us. On this occasion, I once more became aware, at first hand, of the truly humiliating contempt shown to German sovereign houses and sovereign rights by foreign governments.

However, the Bavarian Government, after being taught by experiences of this kind, was unfortunately far from being made alive to the necessity of a national German policy, and the need of a uniform management of foreign affairs by a Federal head. They preferred to swallow the bitter pill, and submitted to proceedings in the Greek affair, which actually constituted a direct violation of the treaty. The letters and protests, upholding the Greek claims of the Bavarian dynasty, fell on sterile soil, and were, I am sorry to say, noticed by no one, except myself, who had made it my duty to show every possible loyalty in the matter to the Confederate Court.

Meanwhile, the conference in Brussels had taken place. My uncle, in spite of all the difficulties which had been piled up, was still so much in favour of the venture, that he shrank from no efforts to bring about an understanding with the delegate of the English Government. He was displeased that Minister von Seebach was not inclined to lend a hand in altering those statutes of the house-law, which precluded a temporary resignation in Coburg and Gotha in favour of Prince Alfred.

Herr von Seebach often told me afterwards, that, by maintaining his standpoint, he had nearly forfeited the great favour in which he had formerly stood with the King. All the philhellenic dreams of his youth seemed awakened again in my uncle.

Unfortunately, the English Government showed no dis-

position to meet my view of things. In a memorandum of the 15th of January, Lord Russell had vehemently opposed my conditions. He declared my demand, that the Great Powers should induce the Bavarian family to renounce their rights, to be unnecessary and inadmissible; indeed, he said: the Greek nation would not look favourably upon a candidate for the throne of Greece, who implied a denial of the right of the Greek to expel King Otto, and such a denial would be implied by requiring as a preliminary, or as a completing, step, that the throne should be made indisputably vacant by the formal abdication of King Otto and his family.

With regard to my instalment by an identical act of the Great Powers, which I had desired, Lord Russell declared this necessary, only in so far as England, France, and Russia, stood in certain treaty relations to one another respecting the exclusion of the members of their dynasties. The right of the Greek nation, however, to choose for its King, whomever it liked, must be left unimpaired. Against the regency which I offered, the English Minister likewise raised a positive objection, and even regarded the means demanded by me for establishing a new order of things, as of secondary importance.

When I stayed in London, a few months later, Lord Palmerston broached the Greek question from the same points of view which were conspicuous in Russell's memorandum. He declared that my conditions were quite impracticable, and regretted with all his heart, that he had not been able to speak with me, before the matter was decided. But his views on the position of a King of Greece were of such a kind, that I hardly had cause to regret that my candidature was dropped.

On this occasion, Lord Palmerston made the assertion, that an army and a fleet could only be detrimental and disadvantageous to Greece, since they were sure to involve the State in complications, for which the King was no match, either at home, or abroad. What was required in Greece, was chiefly a good gendarmerie.

I expressed my surprise at his thus recommending a principle, which he had zealously opposed in reference to Naples, and which he had cited as a reason why the Bourbons

had fallen. It was just by the police-rule prevailing there, that the aversion of the English against the Italian dynasties had always been justified.

There was no doubt, that both Russell and Palmerston, at the time when they sent General Grey to Brussels, were firmly determined not to agree to a solution of the question, as I had it in view.

General Grey carefully worked out the conversation which I had with him on the 19th of January, and brought it to the knowledge of the English Cabinet in the following shape:

Minute of a Conversation with H.R.H. the Duke of Saxe-Coburg.

'The Duke entered fully into the circumstances under which it was proposed to him to become a candidate for the Greek crown, and discussed the answers contained in Lord Russell's Memorandum to the conditions attached by H.R.H. to the acceptance of the Greek crown, if offered to him. H.R.H. does not find those answers on all points conclusive. He admits that the arguments contained in the Memorandum against the title of "Regent" and in favour of the Royal title have great force. But, in consenting to accept this title, he asserts with the utmost energy the necessity of retaining the full exercise of his Ducal rights, and of his maintaining intact, as it now exists, his position as a member of the German Confederation. He believes that this maintenance of his existing rights is not only in conformity with the interests of the Duchies of Coburg and Gotha, but is also commanded by the throne of the Greeks, who must understand that the social position of their Sovereign does not depend solely upon them.

'It would be his task to make, with the consent of the Coburg-Gotha Parliament, those arrangements which would be necessary for this purpose; and as he would assume this not very enviable crown for no personal interest, but (in addition to those of the Greek nation) in the interests of his family, he believes that he would meet, in making those arrangements, with the hearty support of all the members of his family. H.R.H. meant that he should be at liberty, if he thought fit, to resign the Greek government in favour of his successor, to be named at once, not by his sole authority, but by the

The Powers, he said, were too much bound by the treaty of Paris, and it would be lost pains to make any proposition to them on that score. With regard to my personal demands, however, the King had a more favourable opinion, and thought it fair that I should not give up any of my rights in Germany. He cited, in support of my views, the relations of the Hanoverian dynasty in England and remarked, that even George IV often used to say: 'I shall go to Hanover, if they plague me too much.'

In the meantime, Lord Russell's answer to my enquiries arrived. He assured me, that the three Powers would positively recognise as King, whomever the Greeks elected, and, as to the election itself, England only required my consent in general, in order to effect it. The form of a regency, however, in which I was willing to assume the government, met with no favourable reception on the part of the English Cabinet, which was once of the opinion, that it was necessary to set to work quickly, and with accomplished facts.

This surely very extraordinary and peculiar haste in so important a matter, in which, moreover, the rights of Bavaria and King Otto had to be considered, appeared to render it highly necessary to discuss the matter personally. I therefore arranged a meeting with King Leopold for the 18th of January, at which also a delegate from England could be present. Under the pretext of a family visit, occasioned by the serious indisposition of the King, which, unfortunately, actually existed, a conference was arranged in Brussels, to which General Grey came on the part of England, and which I attended, with my Minister von Seebach, and my Councillor Samwer.

Before the meeting could take place, however, the whole project became public, in consequence of an indiscretion which has never been explained, and which created, in Bavaria especially, the most painful sensation. I was far from overlooking the fact that, in face of the inconsiderateness of the English Cabinet, the Bavarian Government was in its full right in insisting that no prejudicial decisions should be taken with regard to the throne of Greece. Indeed, both

in my first letter to King Leopold, and at the subsequent conferences, I had always urged the necessity of King Otto's abdication and consent. Still, Bavaria, was scarcely warranted in indulging in any illusions, as to what she could expect in this matter from the Great Powers.

One might have thought that the German Middle States had never had a better example offered them of the futility of their attempts at playing Great Powers, than in the case before us. On this occasion, I once more became aware, at first hand, of the truly humiliating contempt shown to German sovereign houses and sovereign rights by foreign governments.

However, the Bavarian Government, after being taught by experiences of this kind, was unfortunately far from being made alive to the necessity of a national German policy, and the need of a uniform management of foreign affairs by a Federal head. They preferred to swallow the bitter pill, and submitted to proceedings in the Greek affair, which actually constituted a direct violation of the treaty. The letters and protests, upholding the Greek claims of the Bavarian dynasty, fell on sterile soil, and were, I am sorry to say, noticed by no one, except myself, who had made it my duty to show every possible loyalty in the matter to the Confederate Court.

Meanwhile, the Conference in Brussels had taken place. My uncle, in spite of all the difficulties which had been piled up, was still so much in favour of the venture, that he shrank from no efforts to bring about an understanding with the delegate of the English Government. He was displeased that Minister von Seebach was not inclined to lend a hand in altering those statutes of the house-law, which precluded a temporary resignation in Coburg and Gotha in favour of Prince Alfred.

Herr von Seebach often told me afterwards, that, by maintaining his standpoint, he had nearly forfeited the great favour in which he had formerly stood with the King. All the philhellenic dreams of his youth seemed awakened again in my uncle.

Unfortunately, the English Government showed no dis-

King Otto, only the promise was given, that declarations should be issued to the Bavarian Court, stating in plain terms that the existing treaties were to be considered as expired.

As to the questions put by me with reference to Greek affairs themselves, it was stated that I should be supported by the direct influence of England, and by the Mediterranean fleet. Direct pecuniary support, however, was altogether impossible, and territorial aggrandisement at the expense of the Porte not possible for the present.

In the morning of the 2nd of February, I telegraphed to General Grey, saying that I regretted the steps that had been taken without my consent in Athens; that his letter cut off all hope for the success of further negotiations, and that I must definitely decline.

The following day, the Greek National Assembly declared the deposition of the Bavarian dynasty, and proclaimed the election of Prince Alfred as King. With this turn of things, however, the Greek question had only entered into a new difficulty. For there could be as little idea of the son of the English Queen accepting the Greek crown now, as there had been two months previously. The English Cabinet was therefore placed in a dilemma, which was increased by the fact that, after the declarations which the Bavarian Court had to look forward to on the part of England, no German Prince could have ascended a throne, which I, quite apart from all other reasons, had just been obliged to decline, merely out of consideration for the confederate house.

In this stress, the house of Holstein-Glücksburg now came once more to the rescue of the English Cabinet, as it had done in the year 1852, on the occasion of the Danish succession. The second eldest son of Prince Christian, the King designate of Denmark, was William, then hardly eighteen years old, brother of Princess Alexandra, who was shortly to become the wife of the Prince of Wales.

The English Cabinet hoisted all its sails to escape the severe defeat which was inevitably threatening it; and the Great Powers vied with one another in humouring old Palmerston, who seemed to have a special scourge in readiness

for each of them. Austria threatened by Venetia, Russia by Poland, and the shrewd Emperor on the Seine tickled with America, the Great Powers thought it their wisest course to leave the care of the East to the English Cabinet.

On the 30th of March, the English carried the election of the new candidate in Athens, and, on the 5th of June, the Prince was recognised by the Protecting Powers as King of Greece under the name of Georgios. The international treaties of the year 1832 were passed over with a light heart, and, on the 14th of November, a protocol was signed in London, by which the Ionian Islands were ceded to Greece.

That this cup was spared me, I always regarded as a piece of great good fortune, and I was confirmed in this opinion by the numerous proofs of sympathy which poured in upon me from far and near, when the fact of my having declined the Greek throne became known.

Endless addresses and deputations congratulated me on my determination to remain in my native country, and I received warm and delighted assurances from so many who were then of my party, that I think it absolutely necessary to abstain from plundering my pretty large archive of amenities of this description.

In France and England, on the other hand, as I was soon after able to convince myself, a number of politicians seemed to have regretted my refusal of the Greek throne more earnestly than I had anticipated.

The Queen of England was inclined to trace the reasons for the failure of her kind and honourable intentions to some misunderstanding. King Leopold, who, at the close of his life, beheld the Greek idea, with which he had believed the house of Coburg inseparably connected, definitely stranded, was angry with my Minister von Seebach, because he thought he had not been sufficiently ready to remove the difficulties caused by the constitution of my countries and the laws of my house. Scarcely any one, however, so far as I could see, recognised the really essential reasons for my refusal, although they were none other than those which had led my uncle him-

self, and afterwards my father, to arrive at a similar decision. It had become clearly evident from the negotiations, that England looked upon the whole Greek question as one concerning a vassal State. I had, therefore, from the outset, but scant hopes of arriving at an understanding with the English politicians. Even afterwards, Lord Palmerston always repeated his opinion that the question was merely one of a good *gendarmerie*, and that all military attempts would be ill-advised. He had spread this opinion on all sides with so much diligence and skill, that even the Emperor of the French, when I afterwards had occasion to see him, overwhelmed me with amiable reproaches for not having accepted this promising crown from England's hands.

It may have been the fine example afforded by these proceedings on the part of the Great Powers, that misled Louis Napoleon to try and establish for himself a similar seat of vassal State Government in Mexico, a venture, which France paid for, both in a material and a moral respect, incomparably dearer than England.

As to Queen Victoria's personal view of the matter, it kept within the strictest constitutional bounds, and thus the short correspondence with which the affair was brought to its definite end, may suitably find a place here.

'OSBORNE, *the 29th of January*, 1862.

'DEAR ERNEST,—Though I have been silent until now, out of discretion, and because the whole matter proceeded from Uncle Leopold and the Government here, I cannot let the messenger depart with General Grey's letter, without giving you a sign of life, and telling you how much I have thought of you and Alexandrine. But none of us can describe how sorely we have all this while missed, and still miss, our guardian angel and the wisest counsellor we could have had in the matter. It seems to me, in the desolate house, as though we were sheep without a shepherd! Yet I am certain that I have not acted otherwise than my angel would have done in a similar case. What I can do to remove difficulties, without prejudicing the rights of our children and the welfare

of the beloved little country, you may rely upon. You are sure of my sisterly love, as well as of my immense love for Coburg, and the whole country. We hope for certain, that you will come to Bertie's wedding.

'I am not at all well, and this whole Greek matter has affected me fearfully. Much too much rests upon me poor woman, standing alone as I do with so many children, and every day, every hour, I feel more and more the horrible void, that is ever growing greater and more fearful. God be with you. I am sending two books for Alexandrine.

'Ever your faithful unhappy sister and friend,

'VICTORIA.

'*P.S.*—It is nineteen years to-day, since our beloved Papa was taken from us.'

I replied hereupon:

'DEAR VICTORIA,—My sincere thanks for your kind lines, from which I have seen, with deep regret, that, to all the mental sufferings which are still so fresh in your soul, the care and worry about the Greek Crown question has now been added. A good deal would have been spared you, if, from the beginning, the question had been submitted to a different treatment, and if care had been taken to recognise what I was obliged to demand, before I could agree to the offer made to me. I had the welfare of my country and the preservation of the rights of every member of my family, whose head I am, as much at heart, as I had the earnest will to accomplish in Greece, what would have been due to my own honour and the calling to which I devoted myself. The whole question, however, was neither treated with the desired earnestness, nor with the necessary prudence, and I am thus forced, in order not to suffer any longer in public opinion, to *decline* a proposition, which was made to me from abroad, and to renounce a position which never originated in my desires, and which I should only have accepted out of regard for your wishes, the

position of the family, and the political circumstances of Europe.

'From your kind lines, and the whole attitude you assumed towards my duchies during the negotiations, I have seen with pleasure how heartily you sympathise in our small affairs, and how anxious you are for the welfare of my country. This fact will facilitate much, which, were the case reversed, it would be impossible to settle without certain difficulties. I quite agree with you in desiring that Alfred, too, should enter into some employment, which may be useful to him in his future calling.

'At the present time, and more particularly in Germany, where so much still depends on the person of the ruler, a young man who is destined for a throne, be it ever so small, must have imbibed a rich store of knowledge, in order to qualify himself for his future position. In a short time, therefore, I shall take the liberty of submitting to your approval a few suggestions with regard to Alfred. Also in the country itself, manifold wishes have been expressed in this respect.

'I have certainly not yet given up the plan of coming to the wedding. I only trust that the date, of which I unfortunately still know nothing, will not prove a hindrance. Also in this respect, we think so much of you, and how you must miss our never-to-be-forgotten Albert in all these thousand and one great and small questions. We are tolerably well, and sincerely wish you physical strength, though your heart may bleed from its everlasting wound.

'Your truly devoted brother,

'ERNEST.

'GOTHA, *the 3rd of February*, 1863.'

In the answer which the Queen sent me, upon receipt of this letter, she adhered to the assumption that the English Government would have fulfilled all my wishes, if I had only accepted the crown. This was in accordance with the view which General Grey also vindicated later on. On the 14th of February, therefore, I replied to the Queen herself:

'Your kind answer to my letter of the 3rd has given me

infinite pleasure. Our excellent Grey, it is true, is endeavouring, in the most amiable manner, to prove that all my wishes would, in a certain measure, have been acceded to. It is certain, however, that your Government made no manner of positive assurances, such as I required, and that a good deal occurred which rendered the treatment of the matter difficult for me, and ultimately obliged me to bring it to a speedy end.'

Four weeks later, I had an opportunity in London of talking the whole matter over verbally with all parties, for the marriage of the Prince of Wales, which was dwelt upon in the foregoing letter of the Queen, took place at last, on the 10th of March.

At the reiterated desire of the Queen, I went to London, where I arrived on the 5th of March. Political considerations would rather have tended to keep me away, for, since the Prince's betrothal, the feeling in Germany had grown no pleasanter in reference to an event which, in face of the soon to be expected death of the King of Denmark, was likely to awaken the notion, that England would become still more alienated from the German cause.

I was the more called upon to represent my poor brother at the wedding ceremonies, as the Queen herself, on account of her deep mourning, did not appear at the official acts.

The marriage took place in Windsor, with all the brilliancy, and in the strict forms which the English Court and State system prescribes. Princess Alexandra, by her extraordinary beauty and her dignified and sympathetic manner, produced, from the first moment, a great impression upon Englishmen of all classes, and it was easy to foresee that the young Princess would soon attain to great popularity. She managed, moreover, to prove herself a lady of the finest intelligence, by keeping out of the way of all political temptations. Thus the apprehensions which had been entertained in German circles, on account of the Danish relationship, were fortunately very soon shown to have been quite unfounded.

On the 11th of March, I left Windsor, and stayed a few days in Paris and Brussels on my way home. I took up my

quarters in Paris in the house of my then representative, Consul Königswarter, whose wife enjoyed the friendly esteem of the Empress Eugenie.

'In the Tuileries,' so my amiable hostess was able to assure me, in consequence of her connections, 'they are at present only interested in Poland.' I soon found this assertion but too well confirmed. At least, the Empress manifested so great an enthusiasm for the restoration of Poland, that she contrived to keep the whole French Press, the Ministers, and, above all, the Emperor, in a state of continual excitement.

The impression which Napoleon's Court consequently made upon me, was somewhat different from my earlier experiences. Formerly, the conflicting opinions prevailing between the Tuileries and the Palais Royal were the object of everyone's attention. Now, the struggle for 'principles' had penetrated into the Imperial chambers. The time had come, when the Empress asserted her own political position. The oppression of the poor Poles filled her with the deepest grief. She had evidently been told a great deal about the sufferings of the Catholic Church in Poland, and Prince Chimay assured me, that the Polish emigrants had established regular head-quarters in the apartments of the Empress.

Directly after my arrival, on the 12th of March, I paid a visit to the Emperor, and was at once received by him. Besides the Greek affair, his views of which I have already mentioned, in connection with my story, he discussed the mad proceedings in the Russian part of Poland, which, for some months, had been keeping the middle course between anarchy and despotism. He remarked, apologetically, as it were, that the French were past curing of their Polish sympathies. He himself could not oppose them, although he was far from wishing to enter upon such risky ventures.

The next day, when I was invited to dinner at the Emperor's, I received a clear illustration to his remarks. For, at dinner, the Empress immediately brought the conversation on to the sufferings and heroic exploits of the Poles.

After dinner, she took Count Walewski aside, and appeared

to ask him various questions, which he did not answer to her satisfaction. It soon came to an altercation, which grew more and more vehement, and was at last carried on by the Empress with such passionateness, that Napoleon dismissed the company, and, taking me by the arm, with a forced smile, led me into his study.

After we had entered, he said: let us discuss a few things over a cigar. Thereupon, he tried to some extent to explain to me the significance of the incident that had just occurred, and which did not appear to be agreeable to him. Referring to the monstrous reports from Poland, he enlarged upon the general situation, and said, with great animation, that the Empress treated the matter purely from the standpoint of humanitarian ideas. He himself had excessively little faith in the whole so-called Polish revolution; the poor people were sacrificing themselves and their fortunes in a hopeless cause.

When I came to Brussels, directly afterwards, I told my uncle of my experiences with the Emperor and the Empress. But the account of my conversations did not surprise him in the least. In fact, he assured me that the whole stirring up of Poland had passed chiefly through the hands of the Empress and her ultramontane friends, and was a 'piece of villainy,' which ultimately would result in the poor Poles being left in the lurch.

In my conversations with the King in Laeken, it was of course impossible not to advert to the Greek matter, which he had had so much at heart, and which had resulted so little to his satisfaction. However, my personal experiences in London were of such a kind, that the King could not deny the mistakes committed by the English Cabinet.

He was obliged to own, ultimately, that the official treatment of the matter had undergone no material change since the time of Wellington and Aberdeen, only that Lord Palmerston's method had grown a few degrees sharper and more imperious.

However, both to my uncle and myself, a great contra-

diction appeared to lie in the fact, that Palmerston had recently told me in London, that Greece could never have a war-navy, without incessantly endangering peace, whilst he was all the time making preparations to extend the Greek State in a maritime respect, in order to maintain her territorial possessions within the old limits.

CHAPTER V

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN AUSTRIA.—THE DUKE AND THE REFORM OF THE GERMAN CONFEDERATION.—COUNT BISMARCK APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF THE PRUSSIAN MINISTRY.—DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.—THE DUKE SENDS A MEMORANDUM TO THE CROWN PRINCE OF PRUSSIA.—THE KING OF PRUSSIA'S MARGINAL NOTES.—THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA CONVOKES A CONGRESS OF GERMAN SOVEREIGNS IN FRANKFORT.—THE KING OF PRUSSIA REFUSES TO APPEAR.—THE GERMAN SOVEREIGNS IN FRANKFORT.—THE QUESTION OF AUSTRIA'S PRESIDENTSHIP IN THE FEDERAL COUNCIL.—A STRANGE INCIDENT AT THE CONGRESS.—ITS EFFECT.—LOUIS NAPOLEON AND THE CROWN OF MEXICO.—A REPORT ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN FRANCE.—KING LEOPOLD'S VIEWS.—QUEEN VICTORIA IN COBURG.—DEATH OF BARON STOCKMAR.—THE QUEEN'S ALARM AT THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN GERMANY.—HER LETTER TO THE DUKE.—INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE KING OF PRUSSIA AND QUEEN VICTORIA.—MEETING BETWEEN THE QUEEN AND THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA.—A REMARKABLE CONVERSATION.—AUSTRIA'S PRESTIGE.—THE RESULTS OF THE CONGRESS IN FRANKFORT OVER-RATED.—THE KING OF PRUSSIA'S ANSWER TO THE JOINT LETTER OF THE SOVEREIGNS ASSEMBLED IN FRANKFORT.—AUSTRIA'S MEMORANDUM.

At the beginning of the year 1861, the relations of Germany had been influenced by a great change in the political position of Austria. Towards the end of the previous year, Herr von Schmerling was called to the head of the Imperial Government, and it was hoped and believed in Vienna, that a new era of constitutional rejuvenescence was dawning for the old Empire. After the lapse of a few months, the Government came forward with a new constitutional charter. The representation of interests, introduced by Herr von Schmerling, met with great sympathy from the greater part of the German

population of the so-called old Austrian provinces. But it was difficult to mistake the fact, that the centralising character of the new constitution called forth great opposition all over Hungary, and in some parts of Poland and Bohemia.

In the summer of 1861, the Austrian Imperial Council entered into full constitutional activity, and Schmerling's Ministry established a firmer hold on the confidence of the German population, although it was obliged to declare the assembly convoked by it, to be merely an Imperial Council within narrower limits. The Hungarians, however, began the struggle for their old constitution, and for their right to hold a Diet in Pesth, which was established by them in the year 1848, and which was sitting at the same time. Much, therefore, as they may have desired in Vienna to occupy themselves, for the present, chiefly with inner questions, they saw very little possibility of letting the German questions rest.

The attempts to arrive at an understanding with Prussia having failed entirely, the Austrians made bold to commence an independent action in respect of the reform of the German Confederation. Strange to say, they endeavoured to avail themselves of a letter on that subject, which I had addressed to Herr von Gagern, a few months previously. It was intended, that the programme which I had propounded in that letter, should serve as a battering ram, and it was apparently made public with a tendency against Prussia. At the end of October, the points set forth by me appeared incompletely in a Vienna paper.

Herr von Gagern was able to assure me, that this indiscretion proceeded from the South German side, and, although I, for my part, was by no means unwilling to answer for what I had written, I thought it desirable, notwithstanding, to publish the contents of my letter in full, together with the motives which had prompted it. I therefore had my memorandum published in a rather more complete form, in the *Coburg Gazette*, with omission of all personal allusions.

The first article of my programme, that the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia should agree that the present relations of the Confederation, as based on the act of Confed-

eration, must cease,—this plain and straightforward language only had the effect of securing me the approbation of all patriotic parties. However, my programme showed a few deviations from the propositions which the Nationalverein had adopted for its standard. Hence, people did not fail to assail me immediately with the reproach, that I had made too strong an advance towards Austria. Still, the discussion on the reform of the Confederation had been brought into a new groove, and the success which I attained, lay in the fact, that men convinced themselves that Austria, in face of the constitutional system which she pursued in the interior, would no longer hesitate to enter into the great German question in the popular sense of the term.

Thus, after the lapse of a year, Prussia found a rival in Frankfort, who seemed ready to act on her own account.

Matters stood thus, when, on October 9, 1862, one of the most momentous events in the modern history of Germany took place.

The King of Prussia appointed Herr von Bismarck President of the Ministry and Minister of Foreign Affairs. On the 24th of September, on the occasion of the dismissal of Minister von der Heydt, Bismarck had been provisionally entrusted with the chair in the Ministry, without any special portfolio, and he commenced his resolute activity with the withdrawal of the Budget for 1863, 'since the house had cut off all reorganisation expenses for 1862, and the Government was obliged to assume, that the same resolutions would be repeated without alteration in respect of 1863.'

Since the 30th of September, three great sayings of Herr von Bismarck had spread, swiftly as the wind, all over Germany, to the remotest cottage. He is said to have uttered them in the Budget Committee. However, their exact tenor has never been authentically established, so that they have always retained the characteristic feature of 'winged words.' 'The catilinary existences,' who had a great interest in revolutions in Prussia. 'Too great an armour for so slender a body,' *i.e.* Prussia's unfavourable frontier,—and lastly, 'Blood and iron,' by which, and not by speeches and resolutions of

majorities, as in 1848 and 1849, the great questions of the time would be decided.

In the assembly of the Nationalverein in Coburg, one of the Prussian members, amid a storm of applause, remonstrated against Bismarck's alleged policy of blood and iron, and declared that Prussia would never take arms excepting against foreign countries. But, for all that, it was very significant that all kinds of anecdotes were current about the President of the Ministry, which only served to characterise the sense of energy that was from the very outset to be expected from Herr von Bismarck.

Thus the same Prussian deputy in Coburg had a story to relate of the Prime Minister, whom he had met in a railway carriage on the way to Luckenwalde. After they had conversed for a while on indifferent topics, Bismarck himself broached the subject of politics, and said: 'I have got into a pretty mess there, have I not?' In the further course of the conversation, he complained that his words had been often misunderstood.

This story, which went on to say that Herr von Bismarck had expressed himself in not very complimentary terms about his predecessors, von Schleinitz and von Bernstorff, was confidentially spread in Coburg, and was communicated to me in its present form. As, later on, this whole conversation of the new Prime Minister was discussed *ad nauseam*, in manifold variations, in the newspapers, I thought I might venture to record it here.

What I myself thought of this epoch-making event in the change of the Prussian Ministry, can hardly be told in a few words. Bismarck's appointment, at this juncture, may perhaps have been the result of the fact, which was growing more and more conspicuous, that there was no other personage who appeared fitted to steer the ship of State through the towering billows of the time. Thus Fate helped to place the right man at the head of affairs, a man of whom it was known, that he was not to be restrained by petty considerations. If he treated the German question like the diamond does a pane of glass, it was only to be expected that the frame which it

would have to be cut out for, would prove to be the one which we had been holding in readiness since 1850.

In the struggle for the method, many a hard and bitter word has fallen on every side. But I am happy to have lived to see the time, when every German cheerfully owns, that he regards the 9th of October, 1862, as a fortunate day in the history of Germany.

Since care had been taken by Austria, or at least on the part of Austria's friends, to publish a portion of my memorandum on the reform of the Confederation, the public discussion of this question had no doubt assumed a more serious tone.

The middle States especially, began again, with increased energy, to bring their old ideas of reform to the fore. Saxony all at once declared in favour of the project for convoking assemblies of delegates, and became the advocate of a parliamentary representation of States in the Diet. On the 14th of August, a motion was made by Austria, Bavaria, Saxony, Hanover, Wurtemberg, the two Hesses, and Nassau, to convoke delegates, chosen from the individual German Chambers, to transact business in the Diet in reference to drafts of laws which were to be worked out in conformity with the Federal resolution of February 6.

It was not to be denied, that, since the resuscitation of the Diet, no similar idea had ever been officially heard of, and, though it was easy to see that the Powers leagued with Austria were more bent on demonstrating against Prussia, than on effecting a real reform of the Confederation, the project was after all sufficiently important to drive Prussia out of her attitude of reserve.

Count Bernstorff, who was at that time still at the head of the Foreign Office, declared to the Vienna Conference States, 'that he would contend against their proposals from the ground of the old Federal law, and that he did not intend to urge the reform of the Confederation in the Diet, but to pave the way for a closer alliance with a smaller circle of States. In the further course of this despatch-war, the Prussian Government was driven, step by step, out of the

policy of negation which it had hitherto been pursuing. It was above all, important that the King was obliged to approve of even more far-reaching proposals with respect to the reform of the Confederation. In the declaration made by Prussia, it was said : 'The great national movement aims principally at an increased position of power towards foreign countries, which it desires to effect by means of a strengthened executive power, and by a national representation connected with it.' It was impossible to remain behind Austria.

In this confident expectation, nine Curias rejected, conjointly with Prussia, on the 22nd of January, 1863, the delegation project, most of the Governments, and my own among the number, concurring in the reasons on which Prussia's vote for the rejection was based. It was known, that Herr von Bismarck, who had meanwhile stepped into Count Bernstorff's place, was again endeavouring to bring about a direct understanding with Austria. The question which occupied everybody's mind, was only, whether the open challenge which the Minister had issued against the Diet, on January 24th, in the shape of a circular letter, would be followed by acts or not. For, if the Prussian Notes contained any truth, it was to be expected that the King would shortly come forward with a motion to convoke a Parliament, instead of the assembly of delegates advocated by Austria and the Middle States. But, for the present, there seemed little prospect of this. However, no one need shrink to-day from admitting that, at that time, the whole of the Liberal, as well as the German patriotic, parties essentially underrated the grand document, with which Herr von Bismarck, in the full sense of the term, commenced his action against the German Diet.

Of far greater moment than people were inclined to believe, in the then mood of the day, were the words uttered by the Prime Minister in his decisive circular despatch of the 24th of January: 'According to my conviction, our relations with Austria must either grow better or worse.' He then went on to discuss unreservedly, what the position of the two Great Powers towards each other would be, in the contingency of European complications, and admitted frankly, that the state

of affairs in the German Confederation was practically the chief cause of dissatisfaction, and that a further advance of the majority would undoubtedly result in the rupture of the Confederation, as, in that case, the Prussian Ambassador at the Diet would be recalled, without being replaced.

Attempts were still made, to induce the two Ministers of Austria and Prussia to hold a personal meeting, and Herr von Bismarck declared himself willing. But, on the 28th of January, Count Rechberg answered the Prussian circular despatch with a document, which rendered the difference irremediable. 'If, in Berlin,' said Count Rechberg, 'we are given the alternative of either withdrawing from Germany, and transferring our centre of gravity—as the Prussian Minister says—to Ofen, or of finding Prussia, in the next European conflict, on the side of our adversaries, public opinion in Germany will judge of such sentiments, and events will condemn them, should they ever be realised. It behoves us, however, to give the pretext which they appear inclined to arrange for themselves in Berlin, its proper name.'

Austria let herself be carried away to employ such language more particularly by the circumstance, that the conflict between the Bismarck Ministry and the Prussian Chambers was daily assuming greater dimensions, and that also the Nationalverein in Germany, which, up to that time, had been regarded as the quintessence of everything hostile to Austria, was beginning to rise up threateningly against the Prussian Government.

When I returned from London and Paris in the spring of 1863, I was of opinion, that it would and must be possible to ward off the misunderstandings in Berlin, and, by a direct declaration of the German sovereigns, to obviate the fearful contingency which was now being coldly contemplated in the speeches and official documents of the Prussian Ministry, and which Count Rechberg appeared inclined to treat as an empty threat of war without any background.

Under these circumstances, I endeavoured, in a memorandum which I addressed to the Crown Prince in March, to bring my views on the situation to the knowledge of the

King. I had given the Crown Prince detailed accounts of my experiences in London, Paris, and Brussels, and now took advantage of this correspondence to advert also to the affairs of the Fatherland.

The document which I sent to the Crown Prince, has become remarkable from the fact that the King himself, not only read it attentively, but also furnished it with marginal notes.

After a short preamble of a general nature, I went on to describe the situation as follows:

'When William I assumed the Government of Prussia, his friends and Europe necessarily believed, that, based on the ideas of modern times, he seriously intended to make Prussia a great constitutional State, and, while supporting the patriotic endeavours of the German nation, to lend a helping hand in reforming the German Confederation. The idea easily suggested itself, that Prussia would only attain her full position as a Great Power in her connection with Germany. People were the more inclined to believe this, as the King surrounded himself with men who enjoyed the nation's confidence, both in Prussia and in Germany, and who were certainly not regarded as illiberal.

'The King himself enjoyed a popularity, such as had never been known before in modern German history, and which extended far beyond the bounds of his own State. The relations towards foreign countries were not unfavourable. The terms on which Prussia stood with France, were thoroughly friendly. The old policy against Austria seemed abandoned. England looked forward with confidence and pleasure to the new Government; and, in Prussia itself, the majority of men anticipated a rule which would be liberal at home, and inspire respect abroad. The Chambers assembled, and, for the first time, the nation had been able to elect its representatives unrestricted and uninfluenced.

'Then came the Italian complications. The will and the intentions of the King were as statesman-like and wise, as they were highly patriotic and noble. And if the King had succeeded, in good time, in completely asserting his enlightened

will against his Ministry, and against the doctrinary morbid feeling of the Chambers, the peace of Villafranca would never have been concluded.

'Since the year 1859, the full extent of Germany's impotence has become manifest to the eyes of the nation. All German-feeling minds were seized by a thoroughly noble and loyal impulse. The Emperor Francis Joseph saw himself obliged, in order to save his Empire from ruin, to abandon the old system of the Hapsburgs, and, by the grant of constitutions to his various peoples, to give them a voice in the management of affairs.

'At the same time, the belief grew stronger and stronger in the German nation, that Prussia seriously intended, not by means of a royal revolution after the type of Victor Immanuel, but by way of loyal reform, and by means of negotiations with the other Governments, to create guarantees which would protect the entire great Fatherland, Austria included, from attacks from without, and further the quiet development of inner affairs on a constitutional basis.

'What did Prussia now do? Prussia led all Europe to believe, that she would enter on the course indicated, calmly and resolutely, according to a fixed plan, and all those German Governments, who think they find their welfare in an obstinate adherence to the existing Federal conditions, though acknowledged by everyone to be untenable, now trembled with good cause. The movement in Germany in favour of Prussia gained every day greater dimensions and greater importance.

'Whilst, however, the German movement still thought itself supported by Prussia, the state of affairs in Prussia itself became troubled. . . . Old influences, which have brought so much misfortune upon Prussia and Germany, came to the fore again, and the unfortunate treatment of the question concerning the reorganisation of the army, which the King personally desired, and which had been worked out with so much circumspection, brought matters to a head. Misunderstandings, irritability on both sides, lies and calumnies, and many an imprudent word, brought the King and his

people into a wrong position to each other. The King fancied he was not breaking the Constitution, but the constitutional principle with its consequences, was rendered odious to him. His Liberal Ministry was bound to fall. He saw himself compelled to summon men, in whom it was impossible for the country to have absolute confidence, nor were they fitted to submit a programme to him, which, on the one hand, afforded a way out of the differences with the Chambers, and, on the other hand, showed the possibility of continuing on the course formerly adopted towards Germany.

'Let us now take a closer survey of the relations of Europe. What picture presents itself there?

'The German nation in general beholds itself abandoned by Prussia. South Germany takes decidedly the part of Austria. The reactionary Governments, who are hostile to Prussia, make Prussia officially unpopular, and flirt more than ever with Austria. England turns away in anger; any firm support from her, in case of need, unless English interests should be absolutely injured, is for the moment inconceivable. Austria quietly proceeds with her regeneration, and, since the reformation of Germany has completely receded into the background with Prussia, is it not likely that the Imperial Cabinet, driven by circumstances, may seriously obtain the control of the German movement?

'France sees the moment arrived, to take advantage of the Polish risings and the just as unfortunate as superfluous convention, this first political act of the Ministry, in order to pursue her old plan of an, if possible, firm alliance with Austria. The Emperor himself said to me, among other things, significantly: '*C'est seulement une Prusse libérale qui me donne les garanties que je désire.*' In her alliance with Austria, France at the same time seeks the rescue of the Pope. Besides, in the imminent complications in the East, she seems disposed to offer advantages to Austria, which may possibly induce the Empire to look more favourably upon certain extensions of French territory.

'France is now certainly withdrawing from Prussia, in spite of commercial treaties and all the assurances she may

give. Russia, finally, is probably far from inclined to ally herself with Prussia for all contingencies. She is in need of France again in the Eastern question.

'What position does Prussia occupy in face of all this? She sees herself deserted by the German nation, and the German nation itself more than half in the enemy's camp; the German Governments in great part either absolutely hostile, or at least indifferent; without alliance with England, opposed to France and Austria, who are almost in league as a Catholic alliance, and with Russia as a doubtful, and, at any rate, powerless, friend.

'Is this position enviable and desirable? And would Prussia have attained it, if the King, standing above all parties, had really pursued the course he commenced?

'Who could assert such a thing? This position is now politically more than hazardous, and strategically untenable.'

In the answer, which the Crown Prince gave to my extensive letter, he deplored, in particular, the isolation of Prussia in respect of the position, so unnecessarily pronounced and anti-Russian, which she had assumed in the Polish question. How extremely sensitive the King had grown with regard to every kind of opposition, was obvious from a communication of the Crown Prince, according to which, a placard printed in Coburg and calling upon the people to support the Polish rising, had created a very bad impression, and the King wished me to be asked whether such utterances could meet with my approval. I was fortunately able to reply, that the proclamation proceeded from an individual of no name or consequence whatever, whose activity could only compromise the cause it was intended to serve.

Of infinitely greater importance, however, were the marginal notes which the King had added to my memorandum. I subjoin them here, in the manner in which they were communicated to me by the Crown Prince.

['The situation is more threatening than they are inclined to regard it in Berlin.']

Remark of the King: 'For what reason is it thought that we in Berlin are blind? Our Ambassador is more than

alarmed. I myself take a very black view of Napoleon's plans, even though they may not be achievable for the present.'

['Alliance of Prussia with France.']

'I have never dreamt of such an alliance, and I never shall. Against whom is it to be aimed?'

['The German nation sees itself deserted by Prussia.']

'Just the reverse! Germany deserts Prussia, because Prussia does not enter into the revolutionary ideas of the Progressive party, and Germany does not recognise that Prussia is the bulwark against the Republic.'

['England turns away in anger.']

'England's material assistance is not to be reckoned upon on the Continent. Her moral support, however, is of the greatest value. This support Prussia has just experienced, seeing that England has thwarted Napoleon's hankerings after the left bank of the Rhine. The turning away of the English Government, therefore, appears, after all, not to be so very serious.'

['It is likely that Austria may seriously obtain the control of the German movement.']

'What is meant by seriously? The re-introduction of the delegates, or the like? Prussia has never given up the reform of Germany. But she has adjourned her December-Bernstorff-programme, because there is no prospect of its being carried through.'

['The Emperor said: *c'est seulement une Prusse libérale.*']

'Is Prussia to base her whole policy on such a "*mot*?" That, at least, is not my policy.'

['France appears inclined to offer Austria advantages in the East, which may induce her to look more favourably upon certain extensions of French territory.']

'Very possible. In the same way as France offered me half Germany in 1859. It only depends upon what others say to it, and on whose side legality forms the basis. In 1859, I had this basis.'

['Russia is probably far from inclined to ally herself with Prussia for all contingencies.']

'Nor is this Prussia's view and intention. She concluded the frontier convention, to secure Prussian interests, and has completely attained this end. Is Prussia perhaps to blow into the Polish revolutionary trumpet, for the sake of France's favour? Austria is now bearing the costs and the unpleasantness, as a reward for her flirtation with Poland.'

['Napoleon desires to make Russia susceptible of his secret wishes.']

'Very possible. Every day has its business.'

['Prussia is without allies.']

'As soon as danger threatens, Prussia is again sought by everyone. History teaches this.'

['The position is politically more than hazardous.']

'It is serious, but not hazardous; unless it be assumed, that Austria and Germany would conclude an alliance with France against Prussia. Is this to be supposed?'

(Signed) 'WILLIAM.

'APRIL, 14*th*, 1863.'

The month of August, 1863, began at all German Courts with a kind of anxious expectation as to the resolutions which the Emperor of Austria was about to take concerning the affairs of the German Confederation. Nobody dared to assert, that the personal intervention of the German Presidential Power in favour of a reform of Germany could not result in a complete success. The Prussian Government was passing through a time of dangerous excitement, such as it had never done before, and never did again afterwards. Will the King of Prussia respond to the summons of the Emperor Francis Joseph? Will an understanding between the two German Great Powers be arrived at?

I received enquiries and communications from all sides, and, since it was known that I had lately been personally active in Vienna in similar affairs, people thought fit to credit me with having taken a conspicuous part in the projects of the reform itself. But, as a matter of fact, as the reader knows, I had not, nor could I have, exercised the slightest influence on the settling of the so-called draft.

At last, on the 6th of August, the invitation of the Emperor of Austria, which was addressed to all the German sovereigns, also reached my Government.

When I forwarded my reply to the Emperor of Austria, I had not yet been officially informed of the refusal of the King of Prussia to attend the Congress. It was only on the following day, that the fact was communicated to Minister von Seebach by the Prussian Ambassador in Dresden.

The reasons adduced in this document for the attitude of the King, were principally derived from scruples of a formal kind, such as could be raised against a meeting of the sovereigns, before the basis of an understanding had been arrived at in the Cabinets. Owing to this circumstance, King William thought it advisable to abstain from appearing at such a meeting. He apprehended, so ran the despatch, that, owing to the expectations which would inevitably be raised in the German nation by a Congress of sovereigns, a dangerous reaction would be sure to set in, if the assembly remained without a really satisfactory result.

The view of the Congress which appeared in the King's letter to the Emperor of Austria, was to be regarded as a result of his own personal reflections. Acting in this sense, the leading Minister, in his despatch of August, had accordingly called upon the friendly Governments to follow the example of the King, and in like manner decline the Emperor's invitation: 'I may presume'—thus ran the despatch—'that the obvious scruples and motives, which . . . . . and, moreover, the certainty of His Majesty the King's refusal, will not fail to carry weight with the other German Courts, when they consider this proposal.'

However, the waves of a certain popular enthusiasm for the Frankfort plans of the German sovereigns, were already running too high, and, in a great part of Germany the idea that at least something was going to be done, had already produced a kindling effect. Hence, just Prussia's best friends were unable to see the good of the King's standing apart, and not appearing at the Congress.

I left Coburg in the evening of the 14th of August, and

arrived in Frankfort early on the 15th. The illustrious company which had assembled there, showed outwardly more harmony than appeared to prevail inwardly, and an attentive observer could, at the first moment, plainly distinguish the parties which existed among the sovereigns.

These latter had started on their journey with very different opinions. There were some among them, who had approached the matter with a kind of nihilism. The undeniable experience, that hitherto all attempts at the unification of Germany had failed, led them to the anxious assumption, that this newest attempt would fare no better than the previous ones.

So thought the King of Hanover, the Elector of Hesse, the Duke of Meiningen, and many others. The King of Hanover declared, that his appearance there was a matter of mere courtesy. If the Emperor of Austria issued an invitation to a meeting, it had to be responded to out of politeness, quite irrespective of its motive. It was not to be concluded therefore, that one pursued the same object. The Elector of Hesse appeared in Frankfort without his Minister, and delighted in every kind of negative humour. When, at the deliberations *in plenum*, I was unexpectedly placed next to him, he appears to have been suddenly reminded of the Berlin Congress of the year 1850, and said, in his hesitating way of speaking: 'This is nice, indeed, that we should sit together again. You will now be able to correct me again, as you did in Berlin. That is your forte.'

The Kings of Wurtemberg and the Netherlands had their representatives, the former having sent the Crown Prince, and the latter Prince Henry. The Congress, as a whole, consisted of twenty-four sovereign personages and the four burgomasters of the Free Cities.

Of great moment, but at the same time very peculiar, was the position of Bavaria and Saxony. Both King Max and King John appeared to be greatly in favour of the matter, and their Ministers, von Beust and von Schrenk, had at once entered into lively intercourse with Count Rechberg. The Grand Duke of Hesse came attended by Herr von Dalwigk,

who endeavoured to blow as vigorously as possible into the great trumpet of the Austrian reform projects. Amongst the following of these statesmen, it was thought that Prussia's absence might be looked upon as of less consequence.

The Berlin newspapers, on the other hand, gave out the pass-word, that the chief object pursued at the Congress of Sovereigns, was to effect a separate alliance with Austria. But this assertion, so far as the person of the Emperor was concerned, missed the mark altogether, for there was not one among the assembled sovereigns, upon whom such an insinuation of the Press produced the slightest effect.

The excellent manner in which the Emperor approached the German sovereigns at this great moment of his life, inspired implicit confidence, and unrooted from the outset every attempt to carry distrust into the assembly.

The possibility that the great German question could, and would, be solved, without a sword-stroke, and without civil war, by an honest will, suggested itself to every one who took part in the Congress. Nor do I believe, even now, that any one deserves reproach for having shared in this endeavour, least of all the chivalrous and benevolent Emperor of Austria, who undertook the task.

Everything, of course, depended upon the way in which the whole business was conducted, and this was unimpeachable, so far as it proceeded from the Emperor of Austria personally. He opened the discussion, on the 17th of August, at eleven o'clock, at once with a skill and self-possession, which inspired us all with the greatest confidence and esteem. I have proofs, that in all European circles this personal bearing of the Emperor had the effect of greatly strengthening the moral prestige of Austria, and that it temporarily even awakened scruples here and there in Prussia, as to the correctness of the course adopted by that State.

On the 23rd of August, I was obliged to return to Coburg by special train, in company with the Archduke Joseph of Austria, in order to be present at the betrothal of the latter with Princess Clotilde, daughter of my cousin Augustus.

There were numerous relatives present in Coburg at this

time. The Queen of England was staying for the summer in the Rosenau. On the 19th of August, the Crown Princess of Prussia had arrived on a visit, and was followed on the 23rd by her husband, whilst nearly the whole family of my cousin Augustus was assembled.

Owing to the exciting political occurrences, the happy family event became a matter of secondary interest. I observed that the Queen of England appeared to be very anxious about the isolated position of Prussia, and it required the clear, calm, and practical view of the Crown Prince to dispel the rather pessimistic apprehensions which both the Queen and the Crown Princess entertained in respect of the future. I thought I could assure the Crown Prince, that the old friends of Prussia in Frankfort were not disattaching themselves by a hair's breadth from the convictions which they had laudably adhered to throughout a whole life-time, although they saw themselves placed in an almost untenable position by the absence of the King. However, just on that day, it was impossible to say anything definite as to the further course of events, because it was to be presumed, that a decision, properly speaking, could only be brought about at the fourth sitting of the Congress. Only this much was already certain, that von Beust and von Roggenbach represented the two utmost extremes, and that the schism among the crowned heads themselves had manifested itself in all its acuteness.

In the morning of Monday the 24th, I arrived again in Frankfort. They had at last reached the point, when the most fatal article of the Reform Act, the one respecting the Presidentship in the Directorium and the Federal Council, was to be considered. I had given up all hope that the Austrian Cabinet, by some act of courtesy, would disarm the justified resistance of Prussia to the Reform Act. But, what I did not anticipate, was that the statesmen of the opposite party could conceive the daring plan of circumventing the whole question of the Presidentship in the Directorium. Such, however, had to be assumed, more especially in face of the events which I am now about to describe.

When the Emperor of Austria invited the Assembly to

express its opinion on Article 5, the King of Saxony made the simple proposal to adjourn the consideration of the first paragraph of that Article, in which the Presidentship in the Directorium and the Federal Council was awarded to Austria, and only the Deputyship to Prussia.

Everybody believed that the substance of Article 5 was therewith left suspended, in order to afford the Congress an opportunity of paving the way for an understanding with Prussia on the whole work of reform. But how great was the surprise, when the motion of the King of Saxony was afterwards construed by the Austrian Cabinet, as if the Assembly of Sovereigns had given its assent to the Article.

The deliberations of the Committee had meanwhile continued, and led to the following decisions, which were embodied in a protocol:

'The German sovereigns and representatives of the Free Cities assembled here, declare themselves willing, so far as in them lies, to complete, and give effect to, the future constitution of Germany, in accordance with the decisions arrived at here, and, to this end, to endeavour, on the basis of these decisions, to bring about an understanding with those Federal sovereigns who are not represented at the Congress, more particularly with the King of Prussia.

'It is resolved, therefore, by this illustrious Congress:

'1. That His Majesty the Emperor be requested to submit the result of the debates of the Conference to the King of Prussia, by means of a joint letter from the assembled sovereigns and the representatives of the Free Cities.

'2. That His Majesty the Emperor of Austria be requested to take such preliminary steps as will now be requisite.

'3. That the desire be placed on record, that, so soon as Austria and Prussia shall have gained the mutual conviction that the opening of a Conference, attended by all the German Federal States, would be likely to lead to a final agreement, such a Conference be summoned by both Powers, in order to accomplish the definite settlement and the final revision of a German Federal Reform Act.

'4. That the new fundamental law so agreed upon, be

enacted in due form, on the basis of the existing Federal Constitution.'

Acting on the last suggestion, the Committee at once submitted to the Conference the draft of a declaration, in which it was said: 'The German sovereigns and the representatives of the Free Cities assembled here, declare themselves willing, so far as in them lies, to complete and give effect to the future constitution of Germany, in conformity with the resolutions arrived at here, provided that also those Federal sovereigns who are not represented at the Congress, shall declare their assent to those resolutions.'

In the declaration which was afterwards really signed, the last sentence, beginning with the word 'provided,' was altered, and made to run thus: 'and, to this end, to endeavour, *on the basis of these resolutions*, to bring about a general understanding with those Federal sovereigns who are not represented at the Congress, more particularly with the King of Prussia.'

However, before it came to this last act of the Conference, an incident of the strangest kind occurred, and the members of the Congress were thrown into an unprecedented state of excitement by an event due to what may be mildly termed a misapprehension.

In the course of Sunday, the 30th of August, the Austrian Cabinet had worked out and distributed a paper, 'reciting the statutes of the draft of a reform act, *sanctioned*, partly with unanimity, partly with an overwhelming majority, by the Conference of the Sovereigns and the Free Cities of Germany. Early on Monday morning, I was awakened by Minister von Seebach, who brought me this document, in which, to my great dismay, Article 5, §1, according to which the Presidentship in the Directorium and in the Federal Council had been conferred absolutely on Austria, was cited without anything further among the statutes alleged to have been accepted by the Conference. Although the paragraph in question had been expressly excluded, it was embodied again in the revised draft. It may be imagined what indignation this caused among many of the princely members of the Congress. The more conscious I had been of having, for

my part, loyally supported the cause of reform, the more painfully was I, too, affected by this almost unaccountable proceeding.

I was, of course, immediately convinced that all was now at an end, and I thought it my duty, on the first opportunity, to express this hopeless view of the matter to the Emperor of Austria. I remember very distinctly having spoken the following words on that occasion: I am very much afraid that the German sovereigns will not meet again in friendship, but with sword in hand.

Nor was this pessimistic view modified by the proceedings at the last sitting of the Congress, on the 1st of September. For, although the Congress, in consequence of the acceptance of the proposals made by the Committee of Nine, outwardly created the appearance, as if it had ended in peace and friendship, as a matter of fact, an irremediable schism had arisen.

The Austrian Cabinet had laid itself open to the suspicion, that it desired to carry through the contested points of the reform draft to Prussia's disadvantage, and regardless of the will of the sovereigns, and it was unpolitic enough to incur an obscure future, for the sake of so ephemeral a glory and apparent success.

Those who were able to peep behind the scenes of the Congress—and this was no difficult matter for the Prussian Cabinet—could easily convince themselves, not only that the reform project itself had been buried in Frankfort, but that, by the whole bearing of the Middle States, a lasting proof had been adduced of the impossibility of a peaceful development of the German question.

At the time when Austria conceived the bold idea of convoking a Congress of German Sovereigns, the general interest of the political world was concentrated chiefly in two things. In the first place, in the American complications and the Mexican expedition of the Emperor Napoleon, and secondly, in the Polish question. In both directions, the Imperialistic policy had lost itself in a blind alley. In Mexico, no doubt, the French army had gathered fresh costly laurels. But, considered politically, the expedition was then already bur-

dened with the anxiety caused by the untenableness of a position, which was based chiefly upon the assumption that the North American giant would, for a long time to come, be crippled hand and foot by the secession of the Southern States.

The taking of Puebla and the entry into Mexico filled the Empire, which was sorely in need of glory, with a false splendour, behind which the utter helplessness regarding the future of the country was with difficulty concealed. At the time when the Austrian Imperial house was about to set to work to establish its position in Germany, Louis Napoleon endeavoured to attach it to his interests by the prospects of the Mexican Crown. In July, the assembly of Mexican Notables took place, in which a thorny Imperial Crown was voted to the Archduke Maximilian of Austria. Napoleon at first, no doubt, overrated the effect which this event was intended to exercise on the Austrian House and the Austrian State. They had cares much nearer home, than to think of cherishing these primeval Hapsburg reminiscences, which might engross the brother of the Emperor of Austria personally, but had long since passed out of the ken of the modern House-State of Lorraine. The gift of an Imperial Crown thus offered by Napoleon, was received in Vienna with unexpected and remarkable coolness.

The restless spirit on the Seine, owing to the support it afforded to the Polish revolution, was regarded as much too dangerous by the cautious Court on the Danube, to allow of the latter being caught by such services of love in America. The movement which had been smouldering on for months in Russian Poland, now lay like a nightmare on the limbs of French policy. In the middle of July, a well-informed friend wrote to me about the state of affairs in Paris: 'The Ministry' (it had just been substantially modified, after Walewski's resignation, in consequence of the elections which had taken place in the beginning of June)—'with the exception of Drouin de L'Huys, who will unconditionally follow out the policy of the Emperor, is quite peacefully disposed towards foreign countries; most of all, Fould, who was averse to the Mexican expedition, and only became reconciled to it, because

he looked upon it as the means of restraining the Emperor from expeditions of greater magnitude. In the Polish question, the Emperor has not yet arrived at any firm resolution. The Italian Ambassador Nigra, who has just returned from the Court at Fontainebleau, expressed himself convinced of this to me. The Emperor sees the immeasurable difficulty of an expedition in favour of Poland. The endeavour to induce Austria to take any decided steps, is recognised as fruitless.

'But the prospect of winning over England has somewhat increased. If Murawiew's last acts should effect a turn of public opinion in England, the peaceful sentiments of Lord Russell would give way to the energetic Palmerston. In the same way as the Emperor will not bind himself to anything *without* England, he will not hesitate, in alliance *with* England, to undertake a Baltic campaign next spring, and, in order to reassure England, will respect the neutrality of Prussia and Austria, and guarantee even Posen and Galicia. But he will all the while reckon secretly on mistakes of Bismarck's policy, which might lead to a campaign against Prussia.'

As to Drouin de L'Huys, my correspondent had received the impression, that he did not exactly desire the war, but that he foresaw the contingency, and wished to keep himself 'possible,' in case such an event arose. In conversation, he deplored the policy of Prussia, and it did not escape the observer, how sharply he scrutinised the chances of a war. Noteworthy was a remark of his, that, in whatever way Poland might be re-established, only the present kingdom could be taken into account, for it had to be admitted that Posen had become preponderatingly germanised.

About the same time, letters came from Vienna, saying that great uneasiness prevailed in Government circles there with regard to the Polish Question. It was not the war they really apprehended there, but, above all, the military demonstrations, which might end in forcing Austria to muster her forces. This, in spite of all constitutional draperies, would have the effect of throwing the finances into fresh confusion, which the Schmerling Ministry had every reason to dread.

The Hungarian opposition had consequently a great longing for new complications abroad, and the Polish aristocracy spread the opinion, that the restoration of Poland would ultimately, after all, be inevitable, and that it was best for Austria, therefore, to go with the Western Powers.

If these accounts from Vienna were considered in conjunction with the sudden coming forward of the Austrian Government in the question of Federal reform, it was not unreasonable to assume, that the Congress of Sovereigns had had its point directed chiefly against Russia and Prussia. However, all the paths of politics were so obscure, and, at every step which the Austrian Government took, so many kinds of factors acted together, that fresh doubts were always arising, as to whether the aims assumed were correct.

It will not be uninteresting to learn that my uncle in Brussels was, at that moment, not only in a very peaceable frame of mind, but also entertained the conviction, that Poland would never be the cause of a war. In the middle of July, he said to one of my acquaintances, who took a note of the conversation: 'We had a bad moment in the spring. If Prussia had then carried out the unfortunate convention, there would have been nothing to prevent France from taking it as a pretext for war. That is now over. The Emperor, of course, cannot let the Polish matter drop without anything further, but I do not believe that he will begin war for that cause alone. Austria will not go with him, nor, in my opinion, will England. It is possible that Lord Russell, who is none of the strongest, may hold back, but I do not think this would be justified by a difference of opinion in the Polish matter. Even Palmerston at bottom desires no war.

'For all these reasons,' the King went on to say, 'an imminent European war seems to me unlikely. All the same, it is impossible to tell what Herr von Bismarck may still do. But I believe the Emperor Napoleon has convinced himself, that Prussia will not, as he thought, be at once disorganised by a crisis in the interior. Besides, Mexico will occupy the Emperor still for some length of time.'

The King wrote to me to the same effect, on the 4th of July, 1863:

'The dread of a war is now, I think, superfluous for this year. The position now is, that the Poles will very likely refuse everything that in any way regards the former kingdom, for the frontier is to extend as far as Smolensk! This mode of action is utterly opposed to their wise plan of operation, since they thereby make the question a national one for the Russians, which they might very well avoid. This strange behaviour has obviously been advised by the Garibaldi people. But, between the King of Naples and the Russian Czar, there is a great difference. Nullo, a great favourite of Garibaldi, was able to make some reflections on this fact, for, soon after his arrival, when he called upon his people to fight, he was shot. There has been some talk of a Conference being held here, but I do not know whether this will be accepted in Russia. In a Conference of eight, they would probably have everybody against them, with the exception of Prussia.'

In spite of his not considering the danger of war so very threatening, the King looked upon the summoning of the Congress of German sovereigns as a fact which strengthened the prospects of peace, and he therefore showed himself favourably disposed towards it. Under all circumstances, so he thought, it could only be advantageous, if all the German sovereigns presented themselves before Europe as a united power. Prussia's absence, therefore, did not accord with his views, and he was unable to comprehend it. He looked at France, and saw that the Congress of sovereigns created a disagreeable effect in the Imperialistic camp, which was sufficient cause to give those Powers who were less concerned, the idea, that divided Germany might, after all, one day become united.

'In Frankfort,' our Ambassador at the Diet, Herr von Fritsch, reported, 'the very agitated way in which the French Ambassador expressed himself on the meeting of sovereigns, apparently made a great impression. He actually declared, that it was a blow directed by Austria against France, a fact which most likely served rather to recommend it from the German point of view.

Afterwards, when the King of Prussia's refusal to appear in Frankfort became known, they made their minds very much easier in Paris, and, in the later stages of the development of the Congress, the French Press had great satisfaction in registering the fact, that the project of reform was meeting with great opposition from the Liberals. In fact, there was no lack of foreign observers, both in France and in England, who soon arrived at the rash conclusion, that German unity was once for all an idle chimera, since also this newest attempt had failed so miserably.

In the highest circles of the English Government, however, people were by no means of the opinion, that the project was quite so insignificant. On the contrary, there was all the more disposition to regard the Congress as a triumph for Austria, as Prussia's attitude in the Polish Question had at first roused great opposition in England.

The friendship recently shown to Russia by the Prussian Government, had irritated the English Ministry. Hence it no doubt came, that the Queen of England, when she started on her long intended journey to the Continent, in the middle of August, was affected by a feeling directly opposed to the policy of Prussia.

I have already said, that, in consequence of Queen Victoria's stay, during the summer, in Rosenau, near Coburg, my little residence became, just at the time of the Congress of Sovereigns, a rendezvous of all kinds of illustrious visitors. The Queen, with her four youngest children, had arrived in Coburg on the 15th of August. Since she had last visited our Thuringian country, the year before, the old friend of our house, Baron Stockmar, had died in Coburg. My brother's widow felt this event all the more painfully, as she had cherished the certain hope that she would once more see our friend, who had long been ailing. Since the 9th of July, however, Baron Stockmar had been dead. In latter years, he had increased his friendly intercourse with me, and I had the impression, as if, by so doing, he was endeavouring to find some compensation for the common loss we had sustained in Prince Albert.

To him, too, the course of events in Prussia had been

unintelligible; nor, indeed, can he merit any reproach for having failed, like everybody else, to foresee the turn which German policy afterwards took for the good of Germany. It is least of all my business to blame the views entertained by this approved patriot during those years of confusion and unknown aims.

If we were all under a misapprehension as to what Prussia intended, it was assuredly a tragic misfortune that Stockmar died just at a moment when he looked without hope into the future.

On the whole, he had, in latter years, grown milder in his views. But Prussia, at that time, appeared to frustrate all those endeavours which had absorbed him throughout his whole lifetime. He had consequently materially fortified me in my attitude towards the question of Austrian Federal Reform. I found him not altogether satisfied with the progress indicated by Austria's proceeding. But he was nevertheless penetrated with the conviction, that, in view of the actual state of things, there was no other possibility but to join the current which had just set in in Germany.

I paid him a visit on the 9th of July, when his end was near. At seven o'clock in the morning of the 11th, he was buried. It fell to me to accompany this man, who, for half a century, had stood in relations of a probably unique kind to the Belgian and English branches of our family, to his last resting-place, and I had to look upon myself as the sole personal representative of as sincere a gratitude and love, as ever any wide-spread race has cherished and expressed towards a servant and friend.

When, four weeks later, the Queen of England arrived in Coburg, she experienced the sense of desolation awaiting her there, in all its acuteness. We felt only too keenly, that our uncle, who was the last left of the generation of the liberation wars, would not long survive his faithful 'army surgeon' of those heroic days.

It was impossible for me to be present at the arrival of the Queen. I had left for Frankfort on the previous day, and only hastened back to Coburg for a few hours on the following

Sunday. In the meantime, the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess of Prussia, Louis of Hesse and Alice, who were my guests on the Kallenberg, as well as the family of Prince Augustus, had arrived in Coburg, and, as the betrothal of the Archduke Joseph with Princess Clotilde was being celebrated, the picture which our Court then presented, was a very animated one.

However, there was no mistaking the sense of political depression which prevailed in most of those who were present. Even the Crown Prince of Prussia could not conceal his uneasiness, and, although I pointed out again and again, that the present situation had only arisen, owing to the want of a resolute attitude on the part of Prussia, and that it lay in Prussia's hands to bring about a change at any moment, considerations of this description had but a slight reassuring effect.

The momentary success of an opposite tendency, and the unfavourable circumstances that seemed to weigh upon Prussia, excited, especially in the ladies, a kind of fear, which, at the present day, I should probably consider impossible, if my memory were not supported by documentary evidence. The Queen of England was so greatly alarmed by the course of the recent events in Germany, that she even thought the whole future of her children menaced. Influenced, probably, by the accounts which she received from her English Ministers, she gave herself up to an anxious and alarming pessimism with regard to Prussia's policy.

A few days after my return to Frankfort, I received a letter from her, which one might almost feel disposed to characterise as the greatest, not to say the sole, success of the Frankfort Congress.

She wrote to me, on the 29th of August, from the Rosenau:

'I am very sorry that, in consequence of the long duration of the debates, I shall now not see you here as soon as I had hoped. Who knows how long the Conferences will still drag on. The difficulties appear to be increasing, and the opinions on the individual points of the Austrian draft to be diverging more and more. According to what I hear, I must believe

that Prussia's position is growing worse and worse, and I am afraid she will have few voices in the assembly of Sovereigns to speak in her interest. All the more would I beg you, as much as lies in your power, to prevent a weakening of Prussia, which not only my own feeling resists,—on account of the future of our children—but which would surely also be contrary to the interest of Germany; and I know that our dear angel Albert always regarded a strong Prussia as a necessity, for which, therefore, it is a sacred duty for *me* to work. The King of Prussia will pay me a visit on his return journey.'

On the 31st of August, in the afternoon, King William arrived in Coburg from Lichtenfels, accompanied by the President of the Ministry, von Bismarck, and the War Minister, von Roon. As his visit was to be chiefly to the Queen, he repaired at once to Oeslau, where he stayed with the Queen for several hours, returning to Coburg in the evening, in order to continue his journey to Berlin without delay. In a certain sense, the newspapers were right in stating that Herr von Bismarck had not accompanied the King to Rosenau.

On the subject of the conversation between the King and the Queen, I of course received no information. However, if the political situation was discussed, Victoria was certainly left in the dark as to the intentions and hopes of Prussia; for, when I arrived from Frankfort, a few days afterwards, I found the Queen still full of the pessimistic views which she had expressed in the letter I have communicated above.

The Emperor of Austria had announced his intention of greeting the Queen on his homeward journey from Frankfort, and had at once fixed his arrival in Coburg for Thursday the 3rd of September. The interview between the two illustrious visitors was to take place in the Ehrenburg, and I have to reckon it as a great honour, that this, if I am not mistaken, sole official meeting between the Emperor and the Queen of England was held in the castle of Coburg. On the appointed day, at one o'clock, the Emperor, travelling by special train from Frankfort, arrived in Coburg, where I had the privilege

of awaiting him with all ceremony, and conducting him to the castle. He was received in the vestibule by the Duchess and all the princely personages who were staying with us, and was immediately conducted *en cortège* to the rooms of the Queen. Her Majesty, surrounded by her children, Ministers, and officers of State, went to meet him in the so-called Giant Hall, where the first interview took place.

At two o'clock, a family lunch was served in the White Hall, and, at four o'clock, the Emperor took leave again.

The immense enthusiasm with which the Emperor was greeted, on his arrival and departure, by the numerous crowd of people who had assembled in the streets and the castle square, might indeed create the notion, that the policy of Austria had been attended with a much greater success than was actually the case. The Queen herself was quite absorbed by this idea, and, when she invited the Emperor, after lunch, to an interview in a side-room, I became a witness, at her desire, of a very remarkable conversation, which, if the subsequent course of events is considered, plainly shows the rapid changes that occur in the affairs of this earth and in the proportions of political greatness.

The Queen expressed herself in very complimentary terms on the subject of the Congress of German Sovereigns, and said many flattering things to the Emperor with regard to the extraordinary skill with which he had personally conducted the discussions, and of which the whole world was full of praise. She then remarked, that it was not her business to enter into the actual political questions pending in Germany, but she had a personal request at heart. Her maternal anxiety for her children rendered it a matter of the heart with her to recommend them to the Emperor. Whatever might be the actual difference between the views and the policy of Prussia and Austria, she at all events hoped one thing, that the Emperor would never let the position and the rights of her dear children in Berlin be prejudiced.

The Emperor was visibly surprised by this address. He replied in generally complimentary terms, but did not touch upon the actual political questions. If he left Coburg

satisfied, this may have been partly due to the effect of his having found, in this meeting with the Queen of England, a proof of how greatly his Frankfort expedition had contributed to raise his prestige with non-German monarchs.

From all sides, accounts had been pouring in of a deep agitation in diplomatic circles. In France, like in England, the development of the events in Frankfort was followed with great anxiety. Louis Napoleon suddenly saw all his plans thwarted. Whilst he had thought that he would be able to approach Austria with respect to the Polish question, the Congress at first had the effect of suddenly causing grave dissatisfaction in Paris. Until then, Prussia had been opposed there. Now, the latter's isolation in Germany again opened up the prospect of reviving Napoleon's favourite old project of a cordial understanding between Prussia and France.

In Paris, the greatest sympathy was evinced with the Prussian Cabinet, on account of the bad treatment which it had experienced in the question of German reform. The cards, which had been brought into a singular combination through the Polish affair, were speedily shuffled afresh, and men deluded themselves again and again with the idea that the similarity which had so often been pointed out between Sardinia and Prussia, was ultimately sure to bring about the same international results.

On the whole, it could be remarked that the results of the Frankfort negotiations were immensely over-rated. The mistakes by which Count Rechberg and the Middle States had killed the work in its birth, only became gradually known. When King John, on his return from Frankfort, said to the burgomaster of Dresden: 'May the seed which has been laid in the German soil in Frankfort, bring forth an oak-tree, under which our latest posterity can rest securely,' he did not perhaps describe the real future of Germany. But it was nevertheless correct that the Germany of the past had been buried in Frankfort.

In substance, my conception of the situation did not swerve for one instant from the points of view which I had advocated for twenty years. To secure to Prussia a new

position in the Confederation, by means of negotiations with Austria, seemed to me even then still possible. As, in the opposite case, the spectre of civil war in Germany disclosed itself in ever increasing plainness, I should have preferred with all my heart to see an understanding arrived at between the sovereigns, and I thought it my duty, for my humble part, not to cease working towards this end.

Soon after my return from Frankfort, I sent the following Memorandum to the Crown Prince of Prussia:

'In accordance with my promise, and in obedience to the innermost dictates of my heart, as a true friend and sincere patriot, I take up my pen, in order to write you, in short aphorisms, a faithful report on the result of the Congress. I couple these lines with the request, that you will be good enough to communicate them to your respected father, since I have not ventured to write to him personally.

'The reform project, in the shape in which it has now at last been accomplished, must be regarded as the product of the endeavours: (1) to render its acceptance possible to all the sovereigns, no matter what their colours be, provided they have any good will at all; (2) not to render it impossible for Prussia to express her conditions and wishes; and (3) to satisfy, though only in a slight measure, the nation itself, *i.e.* those who are real patriots, and reflect calmly.

'This implies, as a matter of course, that the project is far from being perfect; indeed, that it must necessarily have great defects. But, under the given circumstances, and under the conditions I have indicated, this was inevitable.

'We, who have assented to it, are bound to it, until Prussia has declared herself. We all hope, and particularly the Emperor of Austria, that Prussia will take up the strong and free position which the state of the negotiations afford her.

'In our letter to the King, we have placed the matter in *his* hands. Never has Prussia had a better opportunity to dictate, in the true sense of the term; for her declaration will more or less determine the views of the majority of the united sovereigns. It would be a grave mistake, and one that could never be repaired, if Prussia were now to desert us entirely.

. . . . I will not advert here to the great European advantages which might be attained by the co-operation of the two Great Powers with the majority of the German sovereigns; they are too well-known.

'On the one hand, endeavours are now being made to cast suspicion, both on Austria and on most of us, as if we were harbouring the intention of forcing Prussia into a disadvantageous position. This is being attempted, with the view to preventing Prussia from entering into any communication with us, because, in that case, an understanding on the basis which we have accepted, and which corresponds with the views formerly shared by the King himself, would be certain to fail. On the other hand, the Press is rousing the distrust of the nation, in order to induce our Chambers to offer resistance to the reform project. And to what purpose? From the desire to preserve the Diet, which is reduced to the last extremity, and, by thereby calling forth an increased agitation, to prepare the way for the Revolution. Prussia, therefore, is to be prevented from treating with us, and we are at the same time to be rendered suspicious in the eyes of the nation.

'This is no imagination, but the simple truth. The Press is already making strenuous efforts to agitate in this sense. The danger is urgent, hence a plain and unvarnished statement is necessary. Whatever may be the ultimate result, it can never be in Prussia's interest to isolate itself at this juncture. For, what would be the consequences?

'1. The destruction of the work of union, accomplished with so much difficulty.

'2. Austria would be forced against her will into an unsound coalition.

'3. The reform party, that is to say, both its good and its bad elements, would be more than ever called upon to take up the programme of a totally different union.

'There is not any question of forcing Prussia to accept this work, which has only been effected by means of a compromise, in all its paragraphs. She is at liberty to alter and improve it, and to create for herself whatever position she may desire. In the destruction of the entire work, however,

I see no advantage to anybody, but only threatening dangers.

'I enclose the copy of a letter to the Emperor of Austria, in order to show you how I have expressed my views on the incomplete work to that illustrious Sovereign.

'As ever, yours, etc.

'ERNEST.'

On the 6th of September, the Crown Prince replied:

'MY DEAR UNCLE,—I have received your letter through Lieutenant von Schleintz with sincere pleasure, and give you my cordial thanks for your speedy communication. The same evening, I delivered the letter *originaliter* to the King, who intended to answer it to-day, or rather to write his observations on the margin. As the King has kept your letter, my own reply can only be in general terms, and you must take the circumstance that I am writing from memory, into indulgent consideration.

'The fact that the Diet of Sovereigns has assembled, is in itself an important step forwards in respect of the endeavours towards German unity. Moreover, Austria has obtained the immense advantage of being the author of that work. In this reform enterprise, Prussia has allowed all the favourable chances of the last years to slip by, and her inner conflict, which has now lasted for nearly two years, has ended by affording her opponent a most welcome means of taking the solution of the German question out of the hands of its natural champion, and writing it on his own shield.

'These are historical facts. The German sovereigns have publicly manifested their willingness, at considerable sacrifice, to help Germany forward. But Austria has thrown off her mask, by finally demanding that the reform project should be voted by a simple Ay or Nay. In this way, the signatures of a portion of the Federal sovereigns were obtained. That the latter should consider nothing binding, that has not received Prussia's sanction, too, is only natural. But I find it just as intelligible and correct, that, in spite of weighty

counter-views and counter-reasons, you finally headed the liberal sovereigns in accepting the Austrian draft, in order to gain at least a basis, which is, after all, better than the fathomless *status quo ante* which has existed hitherto. However, in the mere idea of a many-headed Directorium, I find the inextirpable germ of the untenableness of this Austrian draft; apart from the notion, which is inconceivable for the present, of Prussia and Austria proceeding jointly to decide the fate of Germany. Call it alternate, co-ordination, or what you like, Germany will never reap any blessings from these two rivals, so long as they both desire to exercise equal influence.

'You will not by any means agree with me on this point, but I cannot think otherwise. Nevertheless, I am of opinion that Prussia must now take some step to meet Austria, and, by entering fully into the amended draft, frankly express her views and scruples, in order to manifest the honest desire which she cherishes, to help Germany.

'A manifesto containing mere demands, and quite ignoring what has happened in Frankfort, I should consider foolish. A simple rejection would be just as culpable. What is going to be done now, I don't know yet, and I shall perhaps not be told for the present, as I am in a fresh dilemma. In consequence of the decree dissolving parliament, I have requested the King to allow me to absent myself from the sittings of the Ministers. . . . .

'And under such auspices, Prussia will reply to the Frankfort work of liberal reform!

'In old love and affection,

'Yours, etc. etc.,

'FREDERICK WILLIAM.

'*P.S.*—The King has just given me his rough draft, which I have copied for you, because he has written it too hurriedly. I hasten, therefore, to send it off, and will try, in spite of the manœuvre troubles, to answer your kind letter, with the original next to me, more in detail than I was able to do to-day.'

The remarks which the King himself added to my letter,

and which the Crown Prince copied for me with his own hand, are of universal interest, and may be said to belong to history in the highest sense of the term. If the reader follows the text of my letter, he will easily understand the glosses made by the Royal hand.

['The project far from being perfect.']

'The imperfection of the work is only the result of the sovereigns not having followed my example, of which they were aware, and of their having accepted the invitation, not knowing (with the exception of Bavaria, Saxony, Coburg) what awaited them.'

['Not to render it impossible for Prussia to express her views.']

'It stood to reason, and did not require mentioning.'

['We all hope . . . . that Prussia will take up the strong and free position.']

'I shall make full use of the free position granted me, and shall *dictate*, what I consider absolutely necessary in Prussia's position.'

['To call the intrigue.']

'I know of no intrigues, unless the awakened *Prussian* patriotism, which has shown itself all over the country and in all shades of the Press, is to be called *intrigue*. Prussia does not desire to be mediatised, which the reform work aims at.'

['Which corresponds with the views formerly shared by the King himself.']

'The basis desired by me, was the one expressed in Bernstorff's Note, which is as far from the Frankfort basis as the heavens are from the earth. I believe, myself, that, if we liked, no interference on Prussia's part would be required to prejudice the Chambers in other countries against Frankfort-on-the-Main.'

['From the desire to preserve the moribund Diet.']

'To preserve the moribund Diet, is not my wish. But what will remain, if Prussia's counter-proposals are rejected by the Frankfort-on-the-Main sovereigns? The Confederation within the Confederation, or the old Diet. Revolution? It will surely not be I who have conjured it up, seeing that I

implored the Emperor of Austria to desist from the Congress of Sovereigns, until everything had been prepared on *business lines*.'

['It can never be Prussia's interest to isolate herself.']

'Here, the Confederation within the Confederation is already indicated. Is this, then, a happy result of the imprudent work of Frankfort-on-the-Main? It will not be I who isolate Prussia. But *they* do so, who reject Prussia's proposals.'

['Prussia is at liberty to alter and improve it, and to create for herself whatever position she likes.']

'Such altering and improving, etc., in order to create a position for Prussia, which would even be welcome *to the others*, is my endeavour. But what will then be left of the Frankfort-on-the-Main project, the immediate future will show.'

['I enclose the copy of a letter to the Emperor.']

'The letter to the Emperor proves, that the Duke of Coburg, seeing himself caught, would like to escape from the snare, but is unable to do so without the aid of Prussia.

(Signed) 'WILLIAM.

'*September* 6, 1863.'

As the reader will have seen, the King judged my attitude rather more severely than I had expected. But, with the full objectivity of the historian, I have communicated also the censure passed upon me in the last paragraph, because I consider that it can only conduce to a fuller understanding of the truth of the matter. What I might, perhaps, have said to the King in reply, was exactly what afterwards happened: 'The rest is war.' However, it is an open question whether, at that juncture, Prussia would have been prepared for the *ultima ratio nationum*. As a matter of fact, there was no idea of it just yet. Fate rather intended, that Germany should experience three further years of chequered misunderstandings.

Before receiving the Crown Prince's letter, I had already written in that sense to King Leopold, requesting him to

exert his influence as much as possible in effecting an understanding between Prussia and Austria. 'If the matter should fail,' I wrote to the King, 'we shall be in a worse position than we were before. They are intriguing on all sides to restrain Prussia, and your far-reaching influence might be of great use. The Emperor's interview with Victoria has passed off very well. It was an exalting scene, without stiffness.'

A few days later, I sent an extensive Memorandum on the situation of affairs to King Leopold, in which I assumed, in reference to the reform of the Confederation, that Prussia would be able to agree to most of the statutes of the Reform Act, provided that the Presidency were to alternate, and she were to have the right of a veto in questions of war or peace.

However, before King Leopold was in a position to make any use of my Memorial, the Prussian Cabinet took its resolutions, and brought them with unexpected rapidity to the knowledge of the German public. With regard to the Frankfort reform project, the King placed himself strictly on the standpoint of the constitutional ruler, and called upon the whole Ministry to express its views on the subject.

In acknowledging the receipt of the joint letter from Frankfort, the King goes on to say in his reply: 'This examination has failed to convince me, that the proposed Reform Act, in its present shape, is calculated to form a conclusion to our long endeavours for the improvement of the Federal Constitution. I have not been able to recognise that the draft expresses the actual circumstances and requirements, the consideration of which can alone bestow life and duration on such a work. I cannot refrain, therefore, from expressing to Your Highness, although with regret, that my duties as King of Prussia, and as a German sovereign, do not permit of my accepting the draft which has been communicated to me, as the basis of a new Federal Constitution.

'I can only agree to an extension of the objects of the Confederation and the competence of the Central Federal authority, provided it be effected with full and due regard for

the weight of Prussia in the Confederation and the joint interests of the German nation.

'As the preliminary condition of my assent to a thorough reform of the existing Federal treaties, I regard in this sense the understanding on three points, which I have commissioned my Minister of Foreign Affairs to represent in greater detail to Your Highness' Government.

'1. The veto of Prussia and Austria, at least against any Federal war, which is not undertaken for the purpose of warding off an attack upon the territory of the Confederation.

'2. The full equality of Prussia's and Austria's title to the Presidency, and to the management of the affairs of the Confederation.

'3. A representation of the people, which shall not consist in delegation, but shall proceed from direct elections, in accordance with the population of the separate States. The privileges of such representatives to co-operate in deciding the affairs of the Confederation, would be a matter for negotiation, but they would, at all events, have to be made more extensive than is the case in the present draft of the Reform Act.

'Until an understanding is arrived at on these fundamental points, I cannot anticipate any fruitful result from the discussion of the other particulars of the draft which has been communicated to me; I have therefore instructed my Minister of Foreign Affairs, to enter into negotiations in reference to those points with the Imperial Austrian Government, in the hope that, as soon as the way has been paved towards the requisite understanding, His Majesty the Emperor of Austria will be pleased to join me in summoning a conference of Ministers, who would have to prepare the definite decision of the German Sovereigns.

'Accept, etc.

(Signed) 'WILLIAM.

(Countersigned) 'BISMARCK.

'*To the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.*'

The King's circular letter, which was accompanied by Herr von Bismarck's comprehensive memorial, was answered

separately by the different Governments. As for myself, Herr von Seebach was able to dwell on the fact, that the proposals which had been made by me in Frankfort, agreed, in many respects, with Prussia's prejudicial demands. He added, that, with regard to one or two points, as for instance the veto, and the representation of the people in the Diet, I had only arrived at a kind of adjustment by reflecting that essentially the whole work must be declared to be a compromise. Notwithstanding, my Government could not refrain from pointing out the importance of a matter, for the settlement of which no other means seemed to offer themselves.

Meanwhile, the Austrian Cabinet had replied to the demands of Prussia, and had contested them in an extremely voluminous document. This, however, was not sent immediately to the Prussian Government, but was first only communicated, in substance, to the Austrian Ambassadors at the German Courts, in order, if possible, to call forth Identical Notes from the Federal Governments.

At last, on the 30th of October, the 'official instructions' were forwarded by the Austrian Government to Count Karolyi in Berlin, by which the Prussian proposals were answered and declined. It seems to have been thought, that, with this Austrian Memorandum of the 30th of October, everything had been done, that was necessary to disclose to the world the good-will of Austria and the wicked tendencies of Prussia. As Herr von Bismarck was not the man for replies and cross-replies, the German world had, for a time, tasted enough of the Reform Question, and people on all sides gave themselves the air of being dissatisfied. Prussia alone had in a certain measure gained by the development of the whole matter, since she had forced Austria to admit, that she neither could, nor would, make any concessions to Prussia. But as, on the other hand, the Prussian declarations had characterised the advantages which the Reform Act offered to the German nation, as inadequate, there was at least not a doubt left, that more and better things were to be expected from Prussia.

CHAPTER VI

DEATH OF KING FREDERICK VII OF DENMARK, AND ACCESSION OF KING CHRISTIAN IX.—THE JOINT CONSTITUTION FOR DENMARK AND SCHLESWIG.—SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN AND THE GERMAN CONFEDERATION.—SUMMARY MEASURES RESOLVED UPON IN THE GERMAN DIET.—PRINCE FREDERICK OF AUGUSTENBURG PROCLAIMED DUKE OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.—THE DUKE OF COBURG FORMALLY RECOGNISES HIM.—THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN MINISTRY IN GOTHA. —THE FEELING IN THE COUNTRY.—THE EUROPEAN CHARACTER OF THE DISPUTE.—THE DUKE SENDS AN ENVOY TO VIENNA.—HIS RECEPTION THERE.—DUKE FREDERICK WRITES TO THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON.—NAPOLEON'S ANSWER. —LETTER FROM QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE DUKE.—PRUSSIA AND AUSTRIA PROCEED JOINTLY AGAINST DENMARK.—AUSTRIA DISCOUNTENANCES DUKE FREDERICK'S PRETENSIONS. —DIVISION IN THE GERMAN DIET.—THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.—THEY ADHERE TO THE LONDON CONVENTION.—THE FEDERAL TROOPS AND THE AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN ARMY.—THE FIRST BATTLES.—EFFECT IN GERMANY.—DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRUSSIA AND AUSTRIA.—SITUATION OF DUKE FREDERICK. —DEATH OF KING MAXIMILIAN II OF BAVARIA.—THE DUKE PROPOSES TO GO TO PARIS.—DELIGHT OF THE EMPEROR.—ENGLAND AND THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN QUESTION.—THE DUKE IN PARIS.—IMPORTANCE OF HIS VISIT.—THE POSITION AT THE IMPERIAL COURT.—THE DUKE ENLIGHTENS THE EMPEROR.—ACCOUNT OF THEIR CONVERSATIONS.—INTERVIEW WITH DROUIN DE L'HUYS.—THE EMPEROR AND THE EMPRESS OF MEXICO.—STATE OF AFFAIRS IN MEXICO.—PRINCE METTERNICH.—THE DUKE'S PARTING AUDIENCE WITH THE FRENCH EMPEROR.—THE DUKE'S ADVICE TO DUKE FREDERICK OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.—PRUSSIA AND THE REFORM OF THE GERMAN CONFEDERATION.

On the 15th of November, King Frederick VII of Denmark died. Although there had been good reason to anticipate this event in the previous summer, still the death of the King took place, in the end, rather suddenly and unexpectedly, during

his stay in Glücksburg, at some distance from the capital. The Danes were just about to introduce a new joint constitution for Denmark and Schleswig, and desired to obtain the Royal assent to the resolutions passed in the Reichsrath on November 13, by a majority of two-thirds. The fate of the unhappy country on the northern borders of Germany was to have been definitely determined, before the change on the throne provided for by the London Conference of the year 1852, took place.

The Eyder-Danes had no reason to fear any resistance to their arbitrary proceedings from Frederick VII, for he was never anything else but a tool, adorned by a crown, in the hands of the Danish authorities. The time has perhaps not yet arrived to discuss the true cause of the utter decay of the power of the Danish crown under the two last Kings of the elder branch of the house of Holstein. But it may be said that, in this case too, personal relations played the most important part. It will be remembered, that the two Princesses to whom Frederick VII had been married, both managed to effect a divorce after a very short time. The first afterwards married the Prince of Schleswig-Holstein-Glücksburg. The second laid down her title, and lived under her maiden name in Strelitz. Frederick VII's subsequent wife, by a morganatic marriage, was the famous Rasmussen, Countess Danner.

When the King died, the Hall Ministry was in possession of a power so strongly supported by the newly-kindled chauvinism of the Danish nation, that the heir to the throne appointed by the Great Powers, was, at first, scarcely in a position to assert his personally mild and just sentiments and intentions. When, after his accession to the throne, on November 16th, he appeared nevertheless inclined to protect the interests of the different populations of his monarchy, he was, on the 18th of November, rather violently compelled to sign the new joint Constitution for Schleswig-Holstein, which had already been prepared. The Reichsrath, which had speedily been convoked, resolved to congratulate the King *in corpore* upon this act.

These events took place in Copenhagen, after the German

Federal Assembly, on the previous first of October, had determined to institute summary proceedings against Denmark. Such proceedings could have naturally only extended to the Federal countries Holstein and Lauenburg. But, as it was stated in the Federal decree that the Danish Government had failed to carry out its Federal obligations with regard to the constitutional relations of Holstein-Lauenburg, and as these latter also included Schleswig's political position towards the Duchy of Holstein, the sanction of the joint Constitution for Denmark and Schleswig, of the 18th of November, was obviously an act directed against the Confederation itself.

In order to gain a complete insight into Denmark's position towards the Confederation, from its political side, at the time of the accession of Christian IX, it will be necessary to recapitulate the salient points in the decrees of the Confederation, since 1852. Apart from the succession in Denmark, and the succession question in Schleswig-Holstein, the question of the Constitution of the Duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg was a matter for itself, in respect of which even Denmark herself had never contested the competency of the Confederation. The negotiations regarding the grant of the Constitution to the Federal countries had been dragging on since 1852, and, in November 1858, the Danes had been threatened with executory proceedings; when, at last, the Danish Ambassador in Frankfort submitted three Royal charters, by which the States of Holstein were convoked for January 3rd, 1859, and the repeal of the laws of 1854, 1855, and 1856, which had been demanded at the beginning of the year 1858, was consented to.

The States of Holstein assembled, but all proposals made by them were declined by the Danish Government, so that, in March, 1860, the German Diet was once more confronted with the question of executory proceedings. The matter was adjourned again, but the Diet demanded that no financial law should be decreed for Holstein and Lauenburg, without the consent of the States, which did not prevent the Danish Government from again imposing such a law on the German Duchies for 1860-61.

Since the beginning of 1863, the English Government had been making proposals to compromise the constitutional differences between Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein, which only led to the further separation of Holstein, and the firmer incorporation of Schleswig on the part of the Danish Reichsrath. Prussia and Austria proceeded to enter joint protests in Copenhagen, whereupon the Danish Government, in a Note to its Ambassador in Berlin, designated Schleswig very pointedly as a Danish province.

In the mean time, all manner of arbitrary proceedings on the part of Denmark in Schleswig really led to the executory decrees already mentioned. Instructions to carry them out were given to Austria, Prussia, Saxony, and Hanover, in such wise, that each of the two latter were to appoint a civil commissary and place 6000 men at his disposal. The two Great Powers were to be requested, in the event of any actual resistance being offered to the carrying out of the executory proceedings, to hold larger active forces in readiness.

On the day before the death of King Frederick VII, the Danish Government made a statement in Frankfort, which again threatened to postpone the executory proceedings, and the day after the King's death, on the 16th of November, the Ambassador of Baden, von Mohl, informed the Federal Assembly of Duke Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein's accession to the Government, adding, that the Duke flattered himself, that he might consider it superfluous to couple this announcement with a solemn judicial protest against any possible contention of his rights as a ruler, and against any act which was not compatible with his full enjoyment of those rights.

On the same day, the whilom Prince Frederick of Augustenburg issued a proclamation declaring his accession to the Government as Duke Frederick VIII, whilst, in Copenhagen, Christian IX, supported by the London protocol of 1852, assumed the government of the entire Danish monarchy as it had existed hitherto. The constitutional conflict was changed into a succession dispute, the issue of which, according to its judicial nature, could be viewed, as much in the light of a Federal affair, as in that of a European one. This double

connection of the matter could not be denied or mistaken, and, from the first moment, it was plain that the solution of the question would assume a very different shape, according to whether the one or the other standpoint was taken up.

A great part of the Federal sovereigns wanted to see the matter treated purely as a Federal concern. The Great Powers, on the other hand, owing to their participation in the London protocol, were apparently obliged to take their European position in the matter into principal consideration.

I expected very little result from elaborate judicial proceedings, running in the grooves of the Federal Diet, nor could I see how the national demands were ever to be fulfilled by means of the London protocol. Hence it was my opinion, that a great success could only be anticipated, if, by the intervention of actual events, and by the force of facts, the London protocol were set aside, and the two Great Powers thereby enabled to withdraw from it. To render this possible, it was necessary that all those sovereigns who were not bound by the unfortunate Conference of 1852, should immediately declare their recognition of Frederick VIII of Augustenburg.

Acting in this sense, I did not hesitate for an instant to make such a declaration, and I thus enabled the Duke of Augustenburg, who was living in Gotha, to prepare his Government, and adopt such measures as he considered necessary for the purpose of taking possession of the country. I have consequently had to look upon the 16th of November, 1863, as one of the most momentous days, both in the development of the general relations of Germany, and in respect of my own personal affairs. Whilst the majority of official politicians, as was only too soon made evident, started from the opinion that this burning question ought, as long as possible, to be left undecided, I was at once convinced, that a policy directed against Denmark could only be pursued successfully from two standpoints: either by immediately recognising and putting forward the legitimate Duke, or—as this has at all times been considered political law in succession disputes—by the two Great Powers deciding to take steps to conquer a country left, as it were, without a master. Every

other method appeared to me to be nothing more than the old unfruitful Federal policy. It was said, that the second contingency had, in fact, been immediately contemplated in Berlin.

On the 16th of November, directly after the news of the death of the Danish King, I hastened to Gotha, and met the Austrian Ministerial Councillor Max von Gagern there, who, that day, chanced to be passing through Gotha on a tour in Germany. I do not know whether, at the time when he left Vienna, they still had the intention there of exercising any influence on the affairs of Federal reform. At all events, the Holstein question, for the moment, forced everything else into the background.

It was conceivable, that Herr von Gagern was either uninformed on the present position of Austria, or that he was obliged to impose upon himself so great a reserve, that a fruitful interchange of opinions between us was out of the question. Still, I think I can remember that Herr von Gagern personally declared it to be his opinion, that the Austrian Cabinet would neither go unconditionally with the Confederation, nor, for the present, do anything for the Duke of Augustenburg. I thereupon expressed the view, that, such being the case, there could be no doubt that a warlike complication would ensue, in consequence of which the Duchies would very likely fall into the lap of Prussia.

The same evening, I had a conference with Minister von Seebach and with Councillor Samwer, for whom a time of great and responsible activity had arrived. In the circles of Schleswig-Holstein men, who, since 1850, had taken refuge in all sorts of countries and at a number of German Courts, the event of the 15th of November had an intoxicating and stirring effect. These gentlemen were at once convinced, that the time had come for the fulfilment of great duties; nor was it, indeed, in the character of so many able and earnest sons of this excellent German race to shrink from such tasks. Apart from the circumstance that the Augustenburgers had, in a manner, taken up their quarters in Gotha, my Government was also affected by these events, in that, for a long time,

the two most important confidential friends of the family consisted of Samwer and State Councillor Francke, who were both in my service. Seeing that Duke Frederick desired to employ these personages, above all others, I was soon obliged to decide what position the two officials could henceforth occupy towards myself. Minister von Seebach saw nothing to prevent my granting them leave of absence, and, from old friendship for the House of Augustenburg, I gladly incurred the risk that, for everything that might henceforth be done in Schleswig-Holstein affairs, too great a responsibility would be cast upon Gotha.

By this means, a Ministry was formed by Duke Frederick, in which Samwer conducted the Foreign Affairs, Francke the Finances, and Colonel du Plat the Military Department. Various unsuccessful endeavours which were made in the latter department, gave rise to a good deal of pleasantry, and, as the agitation of the Schleswig-Holstein committees, which extended all over Germany, soon gained control of the matter, we had great trouble in preventing a revival of the volunteer doings, which, since the year 1848, were not in the best memory, either with the Governments, or among the inhabitants of Schleswig-Holstein itself.

Gotha was at this time a regular meeting place of misjudged politicians and strategists, of patriotic writers and agents. A number of friendly princes did not fail to show an encouraging sympathy with the Duke of Augustenburg, by paying him personal visits. Other Governments soon followed my example in officially recognising the Duke, amongst others Baden and Braunschweig. The Ambassador of Baden, Robert von Mohl, undertook to represent Duke Frederick in the German Diet, and, in all the German Chambers, interpellations and motions were made in favour of the rights of Schleswig-Holstein. The movement was a general one, and in the first weeks positively imposing.

In the Diet, however, uncertainty, indecision, and disunion, had become conspicuous features, such as belonged to the traditional diseases of this body. When, on November 21, the Danish Ambassador announced to the Diet the acces-

sion of Christian IX to the throne, the Ambassador of Baden submitted his authority to represent Frederick VIII. On the one hand, the proposal was made to refuse admission to the Danish Ambassador. On the other hand, the two Great Powers declared their adherence to the standpoint of the London protocol. The unheard-of fact thus occurred, that Prussia and Austria were left in the minority against all the other votes of the Federal Council. The Holstein-Lauenburg vote, however, was declared for the time being suspended.

The question now arose, as to what was to be done, under the altered circumstances, with regard to the executory measures which had already been decreed. In consequence of the change that had taken place on the throne of Denmark, the majority were not inclined to maintain this executory edict, but demanded the occupation of the vacated Duchies on the part of the Confederation. The two Great Powers, however, prevented a resolution of this kind, and thus the Danes found time, not only in Schleswig, but also in Holstein, to restrain any serious movement in favour of the Duke of Augustenburg. Although the officials and the clergy in the Duchies, acting with the courage of their convictions, refused, for the most part, to take the oath of fealty to King Christian IX, yet, there too, no real determination could be arrived at. People had to be content, that, after many hard fights, the knighthood in Kiel resolved on the 27th of November, to appeal to the Confederation against the pretensions of Christian IX. The members of the States had assembled beforehand in Kiel and Hamburg in smaller and greater numbers, and had requested the Confederation to adopt speedy measures to prevent the settlement of affairs in the Duchies devolving upon might instead of right.

The European character of the whole question, however, was growing more and more evident, and I was convinced that the attitude of Austria and Prussia in the Diet at Frankfort could only be accounted for, by assuming that they had diplomatic reasons for concealing their ulterior intentions.

My opinion, from the first moment, was utterly at variance with the views of the Augustenburg circles on the probable

course of events. The Schleswig-Holstein politicians, regarded from the abstract standpoint of right, had not given due weight to the consideration, that the whole question was ultimately sure to lead to a purely political settlement. They thought it incumbent on them to combat Prussia's attitude, as being a simple repetition of Manteuffel's policy and the proceedings of Prussia in 1850.

That, in this respect, the circumstances in Berlin were materially altered, and that the King was certainly not the man simply to fetch the chestnuts out of the fire for the Danes, of this the liberal German politicians were then so little convinced, that they believed it their duty to do nothing but preach against the so-called Junkerthum (squirearchy), which would betray the German cause to Christian IX, as it had done in the time of Frederick VII.

I, for my part, never believed that the question would be solved in this feeble manner, and I found an opportunity of giving expression to my convictions in the highest quarters. On the 24th of November, at the particular desire of the Duke of Augustenburg, I sent my *Chargé d'Affaires* in Dresden, Herr von Löwenfels, on a special mission to Vienna.

Herr von Löwenfels received instructions, which he was to communicate to Count Rechberg. These instructions summarily recapitulated the rights of Duke Frederick VIII, and accentuated the necessity of working for his recognition. They represented the high pitch of excitement in the German nation, but described the feeling at the Courts of the Western Powers by no means as so hopeless, as it would appear, if credit were only attached to the French and English newspapers.

Herr von Löwenfels arrived in Vienna on the 26th of November, and had a consultation with Herr von Gagern in the course of the same forenoon. The result, from the outset, appeared calculated to diminish the expectations of my representative. According to the accounts of Gagern, the Austrian Government had already taken definite resolutions with regard to its attitude in the great question. The outcome of these resolutions was Austria's firm adherence to the London protocol. As I had surmised, they were of opinion in Vienna,

that the activity of the Confederation would have to be confined to a thorough investigation of the rights of succession, but that no actual interference could be permitted, except from the standpoint of the summary proceedings in Holstein and Lauenburg, which had already been decreed. As for the rest, it was pointed out to Herr von Löwenfels, that the measures which had been adopted in Gotha on the part of the Schleswig-Holstein Government, were highly disapproved of in Vienna Government circles.

Duke Frederick had the intention of sending his brother, Prince Christian, to the Austrian Court. The visit was to be merely one of courtesy, and was to be followed up by a similar visit in Munich. However, I was not of opinion that these steps would be useful at the present moment. Another measure, too, which the Duke was resolved upon, appeared to me to be not devoid of danger, and was sure to raise a good deal of dust. He had written a letter to the Emperor Napoleon, which, although composed in quite suitable terms, nevertheless gave rise to misapprehensions in France, and thus enabled the enemies of the Duke in Germany to make use of it to the detriment of the Schleswig-Holstein cause.

In my opinion, the Schleswig-Holstein Government in Gotha ought to have left all such things to me, and, so far as the Emperor Napoleon was concerned, this would have been all the easier, since, owing to my old connections in Paris, I was in a better position than anybody else to probe and work the ground there.

Indeed, I had already done all that was possible in this respect, when the Schleswig-Holstein Government in Gotha hit upon the fatal idea of interfering on its own account in greater politics. In November, I had a brief memorandum drawn up for Baron Belcastel, who was present in Coburg on the 29th, and who expressed his readiness to bring the same, coupled with a letter from me, to the knowledge of the Emperor of the French. In this document, the questions of right were summed up in the most pregnant and plausible terms possible, and, as to the political attitude which I thought it desirable to recommend to the Emperor, I considered that

an intervention on his part, based upon a division of Schleswig, according to the language of its population, would best correspond with the attitude which he had always maintained in similar international questions.

However, Duke Frederick himself had now applied to the Emperor, and had thereby rendered it impossible for me to gain any influence on his further intentions. It was to be foreseen, that the Emperor would only express himself in very general terms towards the Duke, and it was not until the following winter, when I determined to go to Paris, as will be related later on, that I was once more in a position to take action in the matter. For the present, however, Duke Frederick received an answer, which in substance could not be anything else but a refusal.

On the 10th of December, Napoleon sent him the following letter :

Mon Cousin ! J'ai lu avec un vif intérêt la lettre que vous m'avez écrite, et je m'empresse d'y répondre. Je ne trouve rien de plus honorable que d'être le réprésentant d'une cause qui s'appuie sur l'indépendance et la nationalité d'un peuple, et à ce titre vous pouvez compter sur ma sympathie, car je serai toujours conséquent dans ma conduite. Si j'ai combattu pour l'indépendance Italienne, je ne puis pas, en Allemagne, avoir d'autres sentiments, ni obéir à d'autres principes. Mais les grandes puissances sont liées par la convention de Londres, et leur réunion seule pourrait résoudre sans difficultés la question qui vous intéresse. Je regrette donc bien vivement sous ce rapport, comme sous bien d'autres, que l'Angleterre ait refusé d'assister au Congrès que j'avais proposé.

Il est fâcheux que la Diète n'ait pas été consultée sur les droits de succession d'un Duché faisant partie de la confédération germanique ; le Danemarc aussi a pu avoir des torts envers l'Allemagne, mais d'un autre côté je déplore que la confédération ait cru devoir intervenir dans le Holstein, avant que la question de succession n'ait été décidée, car l'intervention, qui peut amener des complications bien graves, ne trauche pas cette question, et si le Danemarc était opprimé par de puissants voisins, l'opinion publique en France se retournerait de son côté.

Je fais donc de voeux sincères pour que vos droits soient examinés

par la Diète germanique, que la délibération soit soumise aux signataires de la convention de Londres, et qu'ainsi le sentiment national qui se prononce si énergiquement en Allemagne puisse recevoir d'un commun accord une satisfaction légitime.

Je saisis avec plaisir cette occasion de vous offrir les assurances de mon estime et de ma constante bienveillance. Sur ce, mon cousin, je prie Dieu qu'il vous ait en sa sainte et digne garde.

A Compiègne, le 10 Décembre, 1863.

NAPOLÉON.

J'ai vu dernièrement le Prince héréditaire de Reuss, auquel j'ai exprimé les mêmes sentiments contenus dans cette lettre.

If the attitude of France was thus not only uncertain and reticent, but, owing to the Emperor's allusion to England, also obscure, it was, on the other hand, utterly impossible for the Augustenburg Government to attain any success in London. Things there were, on the contrary, quite hopeless. The Queen considered herself by no means entitled to take any independent step in a question of such deep moment. She replied to my representations only indirectly, and, even some considerable time afterwards, when things had already entered into a new phase, she always only gave me a strictly constitutional answer, such as she could justify before the forum of public opinion in her country.

I am somewhat anticipating events here, by communicating one of the loyal letters of the Queen, composed in the strictest sense of English legality. But the reader will be best enabled to judge by it of the position of affairs in England immediately after the death of King Frederick VII.

'I have requested Alexandrine,' the Queen wrote, on the 8th of January, 1864, 'to thank you provisionally for your various letters, and, even now, I can only reply to your one letter. However, I have also received the one with the enclosed memorandums on the present state of the German-Danish question, and have forwarded the latter to Lord Russell, as you desired. You will easily see, dear Ernest, that, whatever my personal feelings may be, I can only answer such a communication with the advice of my Government. You seem quite to overlook the fact, that England is bound by

the treaty of 1852, and, greatly as I may deplore the manner in which that treaty was concluded, the Government here has *no other choice* but to adhere to it. Our beloved Albert *could not* have acted otherwise. All my endeavours, and those of my Government, have only been directed towards the preservation of peace. I cannot omit to add, besides, that I have been made very uneasy by the rash and precipitate steps of one or two South German Governments, your own, I am sorry to say, included; and how much I regret that a course should have been adopted, which not only threatens to overthrow the general peace of Europe, but also to entangle Germany in revolution and civil war.'

The hopelessness which was expressed in the attitude and the letter of the Queen of England, was also the prevalent feeling of King Leopold, who had already replied to my communications of November with the philosophical remark: 'It is a risky business to have anything to do with this Schleswig-Holstein affair. My sincere wish is, that the embarrassments of all who are concerned in it, may lead to its being brought to a tolerable issue.'

The King deplored the fact, that the German Confederation, by its delays, had put everything in question, and was very much afraid that 'the Emperor Napoleon would now seek to exploit his old idea of a Congress, for the purpose of regulating the map.'

As matters stood, the irresistible proof had been given before the end of the year, that the cause of the rights of Augustenburg was deserted by all the Great Powers, and that the Duke could scarcely reckon upon considerations of a purely legitimistic kind.

In an identical Note of December 4, the Austrian and the Prussian Government, through their Ambassadors in Dresden, informed the Saxon Courts, that the two Great Powers had agreed upon the course to be adopted against Denmark.

When, on December 23, 1863, the Federal troops crossed the frontier of Holstein, the Danes retreated step by step, and, on the last day of that fatal year, they had for ever evacuated the whole of Holstein, with the exception of the

crownwork in the fortress of Rendsburg, and the villages belonging to Holstein situated on the other side of the Eyder.

The time had meanwhile arrived for Duke Frederick, when he had necessarily to take up a position towards his country and his people. After the entry of the Federal troops into Holstein, he had been called upon to repair to Holstein, and, by his presence there, publicly to demonstrate the fact of his recognition on the part of the population. Even skilled statesmen, like Mohl, had given such advice. In fact, it was the opinion, that the Duke ought to hold his entry into Holstein before the Federal troops, in order that he might receive the latter, as it were, in actual possession of his rights. But this idea soon proved to be unfeasible, as the Danish troops only evacuated their quarters immediately before the arrival of the executory army.

A proclamation of the Duke to his Schleswig-Holsteiners, which had been issued on December 31, and in which he announced his appearance among his people, had given Austria occasion to complain in the committee of the Diet about usurpation and violent assumption of the Government. The language which was at this moment employed against the Duke in Frankfort, exceeded the worst expectations. Duke Frederick had arrived in Hamburg on the 30th. Before he set foot in the country, and held his entry into Kiel, Samwer announced his arrival to the Federal Commissaries. The latter declared, that they must wait for instructions from Frankfort. On the 31st, Austria made the motion in the Diet, that the Commissaries be at once instructed to prevent the Duke from remaining in Holstein. However, as the matter was first referred to the committee on Schleswig-Holstein, who were to report on it, the Duke found time to take up his residence in Kiel.

On the 2nd of January, the vote on Austria's motion was taken, the result being, that it was rejected by a majority of nine against seven. But among these seven votes were Austria, Prussia, Mecklenburg, Luxemburg, and, strangest of all, also Saxony. Herr von Beust afterwards endeavoured to explain this behaviour in the Saxon Chamber, but the fact

remained, notwithstanding, that the Duke's stay in Kiel could only be continued against the express will of the most powerful States.

As matters lay, one had to be prepared in all directions for events of the most violent description. As to a merely judicial solution of the whole dispute, I was no longer able to entertain the idea for an instant. I could not tell how far the Schleswig-Holsteiners would give actual effect to what they stated regarding their intentions of staking their life and property in defence of the rights of their hereditary Sovereign. But, at all events, I myself could not think of taking any further part in the cause of the Duchies, excepting on condition that I was granted full knowledge of, and a clear insight into, the management and the course of affairs.

In the first week of January, 1864, an understanding was arrived at between Austria and Prussia with regard to the joint proceedings against Denmark, in consequence of which all proposals in favour of Frederick VIII in the Diet were once for all rendered futile. On the 9th of January, the salient points of this agreement were communicated to me from Vienna in the following general terms:

1. Both Cabinets have solemnly engaged themselves to remain united, until this question shall be definitely solved.

2. They will proceed jointly *pari passu*, in the Diet as well as outside it.

3. They adhere firmly to the principle, that an interference in the affairs of Schleswig is not permissible, either to themselves, or to the Confederation, except on the basis of the agreements of 1851-52. Should it be the intention of the Confederation to confer the Government of Holstein upon Duke Frederick, and to leave it to him to invoke the aid of the Confederation in conquering Schleswig, the Cabinets of Vienna and Berlin will, under no circumstances, follow on this ground, and will most emphatically dispute the competence of the Confederation.

What appeared to be the principle aim, both of the Austrian and the Prussian Government, was the establishment of a Government in Holstein, which precluded all suspicion of

hostility to the London convention. Thus the appointment of the president of the government had still been kept open, and hopes were entertained, that Count Blome or Baron Scheel-Plessen might be induced to accept it. It was only owing to Bavaria's solemn protest against the selection of these personages in the Diet, that this attempt to strike a fatal blow at the existing public opinion in the Duchies was abandoned. Blome had, a short time before, advocated the view, that the Duchies were in reality more Danish than German, and, according to an anecdote told of this youthful diplomat, he is said to have stated in social circles, that the deputations which had done homage to Duke Frederick in Kiel, consisted of people who had been equipped and disguised by me in Gotha, and who always appeared under different names as representatives of the country of Schleswig-Holstein.

On the 16th of January, meanwhile, an ultimatum had been delivered in Copenhagen on the part of the Great Powers, who henceforth proceeded independently of the Confederation. In this ultimatum, it was demanded, that the constitution for Denmark-Schleswig, proclaimed on the 18th of November, should be annulled within 48 hours. The Danish Government managed to delay the answer, until the 28th of January.

In the meantime, the Great Powers made all military preparations, and agreed that the chief command of all the Austrian and Prussian active forces should be conferred on Fieldmarshal Wrangel.

But nothing was more characteristic of the complete disruption of the affairs of the German Confederation, than the fact that Bavaria opposed even the passage of Austrian troops, and Oldenburg raised a protest, when the Prussian army entered the territory of the Grand-Duchy. Lubeck and Hamburg likewise made representations in Berlin against the entry of Prussian battalions, and the commander of the Federal troops in Holstein, von Hake, positively declined to comply with Wrangel's demand that he should place himself under his command.

On the 22nd of January, in spite of all Prussia's and Austria's reassuring Notes and declarations, the Federal As-

sembly, by a large majority, approved this behaviour of General von Hake, and the German Federal troops evacuated their positions everywhere, before the entry of the allies, as if it were a hostile army approaching. General von Hake confined himself to the occupation of the western part of Holstein, while the Prussians entered Kiel on the 25th of January.

The reception of the Prussian army in Holstein was at first very cool, and in many places the soldiers were even refused quarters.

It was not until the army had actually entered Schleswig on the 1st of February, and had occupied Eckernförde, that the feeling in Holstein improved, and the people regained a little more confidence.

Since the decisive rupture between the two Great Powers and the Confederation, the question had arisen for Duke Frederick, as to what attitude he would have to assume, in face of the Austro-Prussian policy. Was he again to desert the country which he had entered with every formality? I was of opinion, that,—as matters now stood—he could not do so on any condition, even at the risk of suffering violence. However, I was not frankly informed of what went on in the circle of the Government established by him, and it was only by roundabout ways that I could learn what the counsellors of Duke Frederick had decided, and meant to do.

On the first of February, hostilities commenced between the Danes and the Austro-Prussian army. The first shots in this remarkable war, which formed the introduction to the greatest State changes of our century, were fired in the morning at Rendsburg, where the Danes still occupied the crown-work, and where they now retreated before the advancing Tyrol Chasseurs.

At noon, a skirmish took place opposite Eckernförde, between Prussian artillery and two Danish screw-steamers, and it seemed as if the events of the war were to re-awaken the memories of the year 1849. The Danish ships left the port, and the Prussians occupied Eckernförde and Gottorf, where Count Baudissin von Knoop, who was then in his 77th year, and the landowners and the inhabitants of the place, pro-

claimed Frederick VIII Duke amid indescribable enthusiasm.

Even now, as in the year 1849, the feeling to be met with in this part of Schleswig, was still essentially German. Also in the other parts of the south of Schleswig, it soon became evident, how greatly the hatred against Denmark had increased; nor could the homage which, during the following days, was paid to Duke Frederick under the very eyes of the Austrians and Prussians, be conceived and explained otherwise, than as the most loyal expression of the actual national convictions.

It would have been impossible, even for the greatest enemy of the poor Schleswigers, to take the deputations which came to Kiel, for disguised democrats from Gotha. The enthusiasm of the people waxed the greater, the deeper the Prussians and Austrians penetrated into the country, and the less the people knew of the subtleties of the policy of the Diet and the Great Powers. It frequently happened, indeed, that the Prussian soldiers joined heartily in the enthusiasm of the people, when the latter paid homage to their Sovereign.

On the 2nd of February, meanwhile, an obstinate battle had been fought at the Brückenkopf of Missunde. Prince Frederick Charles had opened fire with seventy-four cannon, and soon perceived that the Danes intended to hold their ground. In the afternoon, however, the Brückenkopf was stormed, on which occasion the first victims of the war fell, and the retreat of the Danes commenced along the whole of their left wing. The following day, the Austrians stormed Jagel and the Königsberg, and advanced as far as the Danewerk.

On receipt of the news of this victory, all inner disputes were momentarily forgotten over all Germany, and everyone was at once persuaded that the blood which had been shed, could mean nothing else but the complete and everlasting liberation of the German Duchies from the Danish yoke. The question, in whose favour this was to be accomplished, receded almost entirely into the background. The situation was completely under the spell of the military events. The

hasty retreat of the Danes out of their fortified positions at Missunde, and the evacuation of the Danewerk, which had hitherto been considered invincible, occupied the thoughts of both politicians and military men in Germany and Denmark. After the Prussian head-quarters had been transferred to Flensburg on the 7th of February, the President of the Government, von Zedlitz, assumed the civil administration in the Duchy of Schleswig. The Crown Prince of Prussia arrived in Flensburg on the same day, and Field-Marshal Wrangel issued a proclamation strictly prohibiting all demonstrations in reference to the question of succession.

Owing to the military and political position, the war had entered into a necessary stage of standstill. Austria refused to assent to the occupation of Jutland proposed and intended by Prussia, and the operations before Fredericia and at the forts of Düppel could, in the nature of the thing, at first only be confined to small skirmishes between the outposts.

General von Manteuffel was sent to Vienna on a special mission, in order, as was believed, to re-establish the wavering understanding between the two Great Powers. It stands to reason, that we were without any certain knowledge in respect of these negotiations. According to what we heard on the subject from Vienna sources, the principal object of the Prussian Government in continuing the war against Denmark, was to ascertain in how far Prussia could reckon upon Austria's co-operation in quickly and utterly overthrowing Denmark, even at the risk of foreign complications.

In Berlin, the occupation of Jutland was declared to be necessary, if only to serve as a reprisal for Denmark's operations at sea. Austria, however, resisted it, because she asserted that it would give rise to a European war, and because she could on no account place herself in opposition to France and England, owing to Venetia. In order to remove Austria's scruples, the guarantee of Venetia is said to have been contemplated, and the question of various equivalents mooted between the two Cabinets. Finally, Prussia also hinted at commercial compensations, upon which just then the greatest

weight was laid in Austria, after the negotiations of 1862 and the conclusion of the French treaty of commerce.

The Austrian Government is said to have been not averse to take Prussia's proposals in the latter respect into special consideration, and, for a moment, it appeared as if the point had been found, on which an understanding between the two Great Powers would be possible. On the other hand, however, Prussia's offer appeared to have increased Austria's suspicion that her ally might contrive to gain sole possession of all the advantages of the war in the North.

In the beginning of March, the feeling in Holstein itself had sunk to such a level, that men of all classes were deliberating what was to be done in the event of the Duke being banished. When citizens of Kiel applied to the Duke's councillors to hear whether any danger of this kind existed Samwer only gave the consoling answer: 'The King of Prussia will never suffer such a thing.' In the Government circles of Holstein, on the other hand, it was considered not only possible, but even very likely, that those who had hitherto surrounded the Duke, would be immediately banished, if the Austro-Prussian civil administration of Schleswig should also be introduced in Holstein. The Duke was the only one who would not share these fears, and he preserved great composure and confidence, which he knew how to communicate to others.

Such was the position of things in Holstein, when a tragic event took place in Southern Germany, by which the cause of Schleswig-Holstein lost one of its most powerful and influential advocates.

On the 10th of March, 1864, King Max II of Bavaria died, before completing his 53rd year. His death occurred so suddenly and unexpectedly, that, in view of the great youth of his successor, opinions were very divided, as to whether it would prove possible to maintain the pronounced and energetic course which Herr von Schrenk and Herr von der Pfordten had pursued, if their policy should not be backed up by the Royal will in the same vigorous way as hitherto.

Towards the end of the year 1863, I had determined to go

to Paris in the course of the winter, for the purpose of paying a visit again this year at the Imperial Court. I wanted to hear from the lips of the Emperor himself, what he personally thought fit to say about the altered circumstances of Europe, as men appeared to be entirely groping in the dark with regard to the policy of his Cabinet and that of the Western Powers in general. At New Year, I gave instructions to my Minister in Paris, Baron Königswarter, to take advantage of the reception which was sure to be held on New Year's day, according to the custom prevailing at the Imperial Court, to inform the Emperor of my lively desire to visit him in the course of the winter. The Emperor received this announcement, as Königswarter assured me, with unusual eagerness, and sent me word that he would be extremely pleased to see me again.

However, the course of events in Germany, and the progress of the war against Denmark, seemed to prevent, rather than further, the plan of my journey, and in many friendly disposed circles it met with decided disapprobation.

Besides, the letter which Duke Frederick had personally addressed to the Emperor Napoleon, rendered all negotiations with the French Cabinet difficult for me, because people were only too inclined to identify me, in all and everything, with what was being done in Kiel, and by the Schleswig-Holstein Government, which had just been recognised by me. Thus the plan of my journey had almost been put aside, when suddenly all kinds of proposals for a European Congress were set afoot. In the different centres of European politics, people were quite in the dark regarding the sentiments of the Emperor Napoleon. Only few men were at that time informed as to the real state of affairs. Owing particularly to the uncertainty and the unreliability of English policy, the Emperor of Austria thought it desirable to pave the way for a close alliance with Prussia and the best possible understanding with Russia. Manteuffel's stay in Vienna promoted these old friendly feelings.

'They are motives of personal piety,' a very well-informed man wrote to me, at the time from Vienna—'which the-

Emperor entertains towards King William, and which are more powerful than considerations of a purely political nature. The Emperor desires to have an end put to the conflict between Austria and Prussia, which he considers unnatural. Both monarchs, the Emperor as well as King William, meet in the desire to re-establish the old alliance with Russia, and to seek, in faithful unity, protection against Napoleon's plans and English unreliability. There is no resisting the natural course of things, so the Emperor recently remarked to Rechberg, and all substitutes for those supports and connections upon which Austria is dependent, have not stood the test.'

Owing to this profound dynastic feeling, which united the Eastern Courts in the best sense of the term, people lived, especially in regard to Italy and Poland, in the fear that Napoleon would take advantage of any disunion between Prussia and Austria, to prepare fresh difficulties for Austria.

It was naturally not Prussia's business to reassure Austria with regard to the alleged dangers incessantly threatening her from Napoleon, and if I desired, on my part, to endeavour to form an independent opinion as to what intentions really existed at the Court of the Tuileries, and what Louis Napoleon thought of the position of affairs, this could only be effected by a journey to Paris.

In England, however, they were little edified, when the news arrived there, that I was really determined to pay my long promised visit to the Emperor. One of the greatest delusions under which the Ducal party in Kiel laboured, was that the English Government could be prevailed upon to abandon its standpoint of 1852.

Reminiscences from the times when Chevalier Bunsen possessed, or rather thought he possessed, influence in England, induced the advocates of the Augustenburg cause to expend a great deal of money and trouble in gaining connections, with the assistance of which England was ultimately to be made serviceable to public opinion in Germany.

Nor can it be denied, that Samwer's and Herr von Bernhardi's efforts really succeeded in attaining some result in the newspaper press in London. They managed at least gradually

to moderate the vulgar tone in which the German cause used to be discussed in many of the English papers. Whether this was effected by means of the copious and rich dinners which Samwer had urgently recommended Herr von Bernhardi to give to the editors, still remains uncertain. The chief thing was, that the accomplished facts, and the successes of the Austro-Prussian arms, began to preclude all English pleasantries, and rendered a more serious treatment of the subject inevitable. If the Germans appeared to attach too great a weight to the fact that two tendencies were opposing one another in the highest English circles, and if it was assumed that the Prince of Wales advocated the Danish interests as decidedly as the Queen did the German, all these fears and hopes were based on total ignorance of the actual facts. The whole Royal House, as I have already observed, had taken up the strictest constitutional standpoint in this difficult question, and abstained from all acts that lay outside the policy of the Cabinet.

In the meantime, the Tories had risen in decided opposition against the favouritism shown to Denmark, and resolved at the end of January to make a stand against Palmerston's policy. In the event of the Speech from the Throne containing a passage against Germany, Disraeli was sharply to oppose it, and to declare that not one man, nor one sixpence, would be granted for the war. The support of Bright, Cobden, and the Manchester men, was assured. The Tories strongly censured the Government for having held out any prospect of assistance whatever to the Danes, and hoped to be able to make use of the Cabinet's friendliness towards the Danes in overthrowing Palmerston. However, the expected passage in the Queen's Speech from the Throne was not forthcoming, and nothing was left of the intended blow against Germany but a gap, which scarcely deceived anyone as to the sinister intentions of the Ministry.

But Lord Palmerston had also failed to win over Louis Napoleon to his views and intentions, and a tension now arose between the two Governments, which grew greater every day. Napoleon was so little inclined to treat with Lord Cowley,

that Henry Lytton Bulwer had to be sent on a special mission to Paris, whilst the English newspapers talked a great deal about England being on the point of equipping an expedition to Copenhagen.

Under these circumstances, it grew plainer and plainer, that, without a personal insight into the position of the Western Powers, no opinion as to the course of things could be gained. Moreover, after my former experiences, I had reason to hope that I should make some impression upon the Emperor Napoleon, if I represented the endeavours of Germany to him from the right point of view.

In Kiel, where they were as good as unable to establish any relations whatever with the French Government, the news of my journey to Paris was received with great delight. I requested the Duke to have the necessary materials for a memorandum collected for me, and to send me a personage, who was quite familiar with the points of law, to assist me in Paris. Samwer entrusted this mission to a Holstein advocate, Dr Bleiken from Kiel, who placed himself at my disposal on the 14th of March, after my arrival in Paris.

My departure from Gotha, which was to have taken place in the first week of March, was put off for a few days, for reasons which had no direct connection with the German question then on the order of the day. I desired to meet Archduke Max of Austria in Paris, who, having meanwhile been recognised as Emperor of Mexico, was about to appear at the Court of the Tuileries, and take leave of the Emperor and the Empress. However, unfortunately, already at that time, and before this unhappy Prince left Europe, considerable differences had arisen between the French Government and the new Empire, so that, for several days, it appeared almost doubtful whether the Archduke, who was staying in Brussels, would appear in Paris at all.

At length, on the 4th of March, after the arrival of Count Bombelles, Master of the Archduke's household, it was reported in Paris that the difficulties had finally been overcome. The delay in the journey of the new Emperor of Mexico was attributed to his having been ill in Brussels, whilst it was

stated at the same time in the French papers, that a military convention had been concluded, and the questions regarding the property of the Church in Mexico and the indemnity to be paid to France had been solved to the satisfaction of all parties. I was never in a position to ascertain anything reliable with regard to these negotiations. But, that the 'satisfaction of all parties' had unfortunately only been effected in a very trifling measure, of this fact I was soon able to convince myself, when I arrived in Paris.

Whenever I had visited the Court of the Tuileries on former occasions, it had always been my good fortune to feel myself in direct touch with the Prussian Government. This time, I was in complete uncertainty as to what they were aiming at in Berlin, in consequence of which my position in Paris was rendered extremely difficult.

I arrived in Paris early in the morning, on Thursday, the 10th of March, and took up my quarters at the house of my Minister Baron Königswarter. He had officially announced my arrival beforehand to the Emperor and the Empress, as well as to the Ministers. Consequently, the newspapers immediately placed my stay in Paris on the order-sheet of their observations and communications. Even the *Moniteur*, after my first long interview with the Emperor, stepped out of the reserve it had hitherto maintained, and I think it may not be amiss, if I premise all further details of my story with that journal's official notice of my reception:

S. A. le Duc de Saxe-Cobourg-Gotha a été reçu hier par L'Empereur. Il n'est pas douteux que la présence du Duc Ernest de Cobourg à Paris n'ait une portée politique. Nous croyons savoir que ce prince est venu, avec l'assentiment de plusieurs autres souverains allemands, pour éclairer l'Empereur sur la situation de l'Allemagne, et pour disposer le gouvernement français à reconnaître le droit des duchés de Schleswig-Holstein à disposer librement de leur sort.

It was less accurate, no doubt, if other Paris papers credited me with acting a part in Germany, which had become vacant

by the death of King Max II, and if one or two journalists, most likely in order to enhance the interest attaching to my person, introduced me as the *protecteur avoué du Nationalverein*, whilst others described me as *l'adversaire décidé de la prépondérance autrichienne*. It might have been supposed that French inaccuracies of this description would not be likely to produce any effect in Germany. But they led, notwithstanding, to my journey being misconstrued there in various respects.

My task was traced out and limited by the position of things in the Diet. But I was determined not to step out of my sphere as a German Federal Sovereign by a hair's breadth. If I am warranted in believing that my conversations with Napoleon were now again not altogether fruitless, I can only attribute it to the fact that I kept strictly to the standpoint of right. This was the most likely way to convince the Emperor, that any interference on the part of France in this intrinsically German matter would be an irremediable mistake, and I must give him credit, too, for having kept every word which he said to me in those days, honestly, and down to the smallest detail.

On arriving in Paris, I found Prince Chimay present, and was also visited by General Roguet, who had remained attached to me from olden times, and who, in connection with my very amiable hosts, gave me a clear insight into the actual condition at the Imperial Court. In comparison with the previous year, when I had encountered a decidedly aggressive feeling, originating in the influence of the Empress, the circumstances had altered a good deal. Drouin de l'Huys now possessed a quieting influence on the affairs of the Government, and, both the Polish sympathies, and the war-like ardour of 1863, had become less prominent.

Prince Metternich and his wife had gained an extremely favourable position with Their Majesties, which, tending as it did towards a conservative understanding between the Eastern and the Western Powers, could not be sufficiently appreciated. The Emperor himself, as Prince Chimay assured me, was personally in a more pacific frame of mind, than he had ever been

in before, and had not yet overcome the disappointments which his American policy had caused him.

When I paid my visit in the Tuileries, on Friday at three o'clock, I found him very vigorous, and much fresher than at our last meetings. He entered at once into the position of things in Germany, deplored the death of King Max of Bavaria, and said that the latter had just been on the point of undoubtedly bringing the affairs of Germany to a suitable settlement, which, in consideration of his (the Emperor's) old relations of friendship to Bavaria, could only have been agreeable to him. It was much to be regretted, he said, that Germany had now lost her most important and experienced leader.

As to the question of the Elbe Duchies, it was not to be clearly gathered, whether he feigned, or really felt, a certain indifference respecting their fate. But, with regard to the actual facts, he manifested an ignorance which was indeed astonishing. When I left him, I had to consider by what means I could best remedy this lack of knowledge in respect of German affairs, which I observed, not only in the Emperor, but in his entire circle and his Ministers. No notice was taken of books and memorandums; hence, all the more importance was to be attached to direct intercourse and personal conversation.

The next day, when the Emperor honoured me with his return visit, he himself expressed, to my delight, the wish to gain a little better information. He assured me that he was unable to make anything out of the reports of his resident Ministers on the succession question, and proposed that we should discuss the matter in writing. He would note down a number of points on a question-sheet, to which I was then to add the answers. In other respects, the Emperor expressed, this time still more positively than in my first conversation with him, his absolute aversion to any kind of war-like complication. He saw, he said, that the German nation did not desire any intervention in its favour on the part of France, and he, for his part, did not desire any collision with the feelings of the Germans.

Under these circumstances, I did not doubt for a moment that all the rumours concerning Napoleon's intentions, which had arisen during the last weeks in Germany, were utterly gratuitous.

Samwer had sent me a memorandum through Herr Bleiken, which culminated in the desire that the Emperor Napoleon should consent to the European Conference, and appear at it with the proposal to effect the solution of the question by means of the *suffrage universel*. To this memorial, a string of propositions was attached, which ran as follows:

L'Empereur des Français prend l'initiative de l'intermédiaire. Il propose:

1. Les deux parties belligérantes evacueront le Duché de Slesvig.

2. Le pouvoir suprême et l'administration du Duché de Slesvig est transmis dans les mains d'une commission élue parmi la Diète du Duché. Une élection de la Diète devra avoir lieu préalablement.

3. On procédera après le mode du suffrage universel dans les divers districts, afin de connaître la volonté du peuple, pour savoir s'il porte son choix sur le Duc de Holstein, ou bien sur le Roi de Danemarc.

Quant au duché de Holstein, les Grandes Puissances Européennes et, en première ligne, l'Empereur des Français reconnaissent dès à présent le ci-devant Prince héritier d'Augustenbourg comme Duc de Holstein, sans préjudicier aux droits de la Diète et aux lois de succession qui subsistent dans les familles des souverains d'Allemagne. Dans le cas où les gouvernements de Russie et d'Angleterre voudraient s'opposer à cet arrangement, l'Empereur reconnaîtrait, à ce qui le concerne, le Duc et appuierait cet arrangement auprès des autres Grandes Puissances en tenant compte de la volonté unanime des habitants de Holstein et du peuple allemand.

On the 12th of March, I made Herr Bleiken send an account of my two first conversations with the Emperor to Kiel, in which he said: 'His Highness considers the mood of the Emperor, with whom he has already had two conversations, in all respects pacific and obliging. His Highness has delivered a memorial to the Emperor, in which he has ex-

pounded his ideas in a similar, if not in quite the same way, as Herr Geheimrath Samwer has done in the letter he gave to me, and he trusts that it will not fail to produce an effect upon the Emperor. In accordance with this mood of the Emperor, is the feeling in financial circles here. They are convinced that peace is not in any way endangered, and no one here believes in the great war, nor does any one desire it.

This latter assertion was confirmed in the following days by manifold conversations which I had with the Duke of Morny, Minister Drouin de l'Huys, and other persons. The Duke of Morny said, it appeared to him that much too much fuss was being made of the whole matter ; besides, people were mistaken, if they believed that any importance was attached here to an alliance with Denmark. Denmark was much too small to be taken into account as a factor in any calculation made in respect of the future. Incomprehensible to him, Morny added, was the attitude of Austria and Prussia, who both vied with each other in wrapping their intentions in complete darkness, and gave one the impression of allies who were mutually afraid of being deceived.

As to my conversation with Drouin de l'Huys, I had the following record made of it the very day it took place, which was the 13th of March.

'The first point to be mentioned as relevant in this conversation, is the assertion that no especial interest is taken in official circles here, either in Denmark, or, indeed, in the matter generally. They had, it was said, no doubt provisionally adhered to the treaty of 1852, because it happened to exist, but they felt themselves by no means bound thereby to maintain this treaty in spite of altered circumstances.

'In reference to Austria and Prussia, the Minister repeated what the Duke of Morny had said to His Highness, that he was quite at a loss to understand their attitude.

'With regard to the attitude of France, the chief fear was, that she might be suspected of harbouring plans of conquest against Germany, and this was adduced as the reason why she had hitherto kept so passive. France would send a delegate to any conference, but only if the German Confedera-

tion were also represented there. To this latter remark, the Duke felt impelled to reply, that, in his opinion, the Confederation neither could, nor would, agree to any conference, unless its programme were previously distinctly formulated, and the Confederation informed of it; but more particularly not, if it was to be apprehended that at such a conference the personal union was to be assumed as the basis of the negotiations. The Minister having rejoined, that it was apparently just the personal union in which Austria and Prussia were specially interested, His Highness took occasion to explain the absurdity of such an arrangement, both from the German and from the Danish point of view. The best solution, the Minister said, would ultimately be, to make the settlement of the succession question dependent upon the vote of the population of the Duchies.

'The satisfactory concurrence of this view with the proposal which had been made in the memorial delivered to the Emperor by the Duke, was self-evident. The total impression which the whole conversation produced upon His Highness, is entirely the same as that which he had gained from his two previous conversations with the Emperor. This impression may be briefly stated to be, that a great deal of kind feeling exists here towards Duke Frederick, as well as towards the population of the Duchies, and by no means any prejudice against either of them. Apart from this, however, there is a decided diffidence to take the initiative in our cause, which arises from the not unaccountable fear, that, as in the Polish and other questions, France will ultimately be left in the lurch again.'

In the meantime, the interest in the affairs of Schleswig-Holstein in Paris was very much diminished by the presence of the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico and his gifted and sympathetic wife. Everybody was far more concerned in these illustrious personages, who were about to complete a work commenced by France in the other hemisphere of the Globe, than in the succession disputes of a German principality.

It sometimes struck me as excessively comical, when I

was requested by Frenchmen to tell them briefly, what was really the object of the war which the two Great Powers were carrying on jointly. I had too often gained the experience, that all mention of the dynastic questions met with obdurate incredulity. I therefore preferred, for the most part, to answer the questions that were put to me, by pointing out the manifold acts of oppression which the Germans had had to suffer in Schleswig up to quite recent times. But although, in this way, a ray of intelligence appeared to break through, the conversation usually flagged all the more, when it came to explaining the incomprehensible conflicts between the German Confederation and the two Great Powers. I recollect many a moment of shame, which these discussions caused me, when the representatives of the great nation thought it incumbent on them to express their regret at the disunion of their German neighbours. How different they felt themselves, when speaking of their victorious expeditions in distant Mexico, and of the *Empereur*, who was not only able to bestow kingdoms, like his uncle, but even an empire.

There was something forced, however, in the enthusiasm at this event, and the greater part of the population of Paris was very much inclined to class this State action of Napoleon also under the head of dynastic whims. Notwithstanding, there was an influential circle of enthusiastic politicians of both sexes, who appeared to be swimming in an ocean of delight at the glorious end of the Franco-Mexican war and the foundation of the new American Empire.

At the head of these contented souls stood the Empress herself, with whom Napoleon, however, in this as in many other cases, was not quite at one, but who was very determined in taking credit to herself for having done her best towards bringing about this happy solution. When I paid my visit to the Empress on Wednesday, she entertained me, for full three quarters of an hour, almost exclusively with the Mexican affair. She declared that the Archduke would, without fail, soon rise to be one of the most powerful rulers in the world, and that the conservative and ecclesiastical parties over there were ready to bring any sacrifice.

And, indeed, nobody shared the hopes of the Empress Eugenie more strongly than my unhappy cousin Charlotte. The two Empresses conversed together at table only in Spanish. It seemed, indeed, as if they were desirous of dispelling the apprehensions of their husbands by the beautiful harmonies of the Castilian tongue. Louis Napoleon himself, however, appeared to be the least inclined to indulge in any illusions with regard to the situation. After a dinner, at which Charlotte's blissful confidence had manifested itself in a particularly expressive manner, he took me purposely aside, and appeared, as it were, desirous of excusing himself: '*Une très mauvaise affaire*!' he repeated several times, '*moi, à sa place, je n'aurais jamais accepté.*'

On the 12th of March, I had paid a long visit to the Imperial couple-elect of Mexico, which was followed by numerous subsequent meetings, both at my own house and at the Imperial Court. Since I had last seen this amiable and gifted Prince—in 1862 in Miramare—he had grown much older than the number of his years would have led one to expect. He did not give me the impression as if he were entering on this dangerous and, on the whole, adventurous enterprise with the full fire of youth. Painful reflections at leaving his native country evidently reigned in his mind, and stood out in sharp contrast to the happy feelings of his wife. What appeared to be actuating him, was less the anticipation of success, than the inflexible consequence of the determination he had once expressed. He could no longer bring himself to shrink back from the difficulties which were being piled up before him. He took leave of me with tears in his eyes, and invited me to pay him a visit. Then he said: 'Unless you come over to me, I shall never see you again.'

During my stay in Paris, certain information had arrived from Washington, that North America would never recognise the Empire. Louis Napoleon refused all guarantees to the new ruler, in the event of his becoming involved in any differences with the most powerful republic in the world. The whole calculation on which the existence of the Mexican Empire rested, was based upon the assumption, that the rebel

Southern States would separate from the Union. But the worst apparently was, that the Archduke raised too little objection to the utter lack of all financial assurance of his enterprise.

The clerical party, with whose aid the throne of Mexico had been framed, expected the restitution of the property of the Church as the first act of the new Empire, whereas the Archduke himself was in need of an immense capital to organise the new Government. He overrated, on his part, the confidence which he enjoyed at the Roman Curia, and thought he would be able, with its assistance, to induce the Mexican clergy to be patient and moderate.

Louis Napoleon might well promise his intervention in Rome, but, as to a renunciation of the property of the Church, there could be no question of such a thing on the part of the Curia. The whole position of the Archduke vividly reminded me of the negotiations which I had carried on, a short time before, with regard to the Royal crown of Greece. The desire here, as it had been there, was to throw the costs of a difficult undertaking on to the shoulders of other people. Whether it was calculated that the riches of the Austrian House, and the supposed treasures of my uncle, would ultimately be thrown open to the new Imperial couple, is a question which may perhaps be raised.

This situation made it conceivable that Prince Chimay, in the interests of his Royal master, followed the Mexican question from the beginning with great attention, and it was certainly of great importance, when he stated that the whole creation of this new Empire was essentially an idea which had been conceived and started by the Empress Eugenie. Neither Louis Napoleon, nor the French Ministers, he said, had meant to destroy the Republic by the Mexican expedition. Besides, it was the Empress quite personally, who had contrived to open the negotiations with the Archducal couple, which only too soon created a kind of *fait accompli*.

When, three years afterwards, the terrible drama reached its close, I always felt it to be an especially painful recollection, that I had been a witness in those days of all the fatal agree-

ments, by which diplomacy drove these two highly gifted and splendidly endowed natures into their misfortune. In a series of great and remarkable events, which have filled out our lives, European society has rapidly forgotten the episode which was enacted on the other side of the ocean. Still, everyone who dwells on his recollections, must own, that, of the many mighty blows struck by Fate in the nineteenth century, but few bear so completely tragic a character.

Greater society in Paris had no presentiment of this course of events, although it was to be foreseen. Indeed, he who could have imagined that, after a few years, the heedless circle of the Emperor and the Empress would, one and all, have vanished from the stage, and be dispersed in all the four quarters of the globe, would have proved himself a rare prophet. I had the opportunity to gain many an interesting insight into the state of affairs, and submitted with a certain resignation to the fatigues of Parisian life at the height of the season.

Among the numerous soirees, I recollect one which took place at Princess Metternich's, and which surpassed in brilliancy all other festivities. Although people in Germany and Austria had much to find fault with in the intimate relations in which the house of the Ambassador of Austria stood to their Imperial Majesties, this friendship, when the facts were inspected on the spot, could only be regarded as natural.

Also in a political respect, it was pleasant to converse with Prince Metternich and his clever wife. Prince Richard expressed himself with great frankness on the views which were entertained in Vienna, and which, in his opinion, had been in all respects favourable to the cause of Schleswig-Holstein. He thought he could assure me, that they would now almost be better pleased in Austria, if a kind of standstill had not occurred in the German movement, and that, from the lukewarmness of the sympathy for the Duke of Augustenburg, they were beginning to derive an argument for, rather than against, him. 'If Austria,' Prince Metternich said to me on the 17th of March, on the occasion of an evening visit which I was paying at his house, 'still adheres to the standpoint of

the personal union, they are quite alive to the fact in Vienna, that events have long since gone beyond it. But it is feared that, if they recognise the Duke straight out, this may be regarded as an admission to a principle, which might lead to analogies with regard to Hungaria and Italy, and be used against Austria herself.' However, the Prince added, as to what was being said in Vienna and Berlin about the impending great war, he must confess that he was quite unable to observe any symptoms of such a war here.

From the parting audience which I had with the Emperor on the 18th of March, I hoped to gain some permanent results in respect of my Schleswig-Holstein negotiations. Indeed, Napoleon really expressed himself so frankly and officially to me, that I was justified in making every use of his declarations. I therefore subjoin here a literal transcript of the letter which Herr Bleiken addressed to Kiel on the following day at my dictation.

'By order of His Highness, I have the honour to report the conversation which His Highness had yesterday with the Emperor, on the occasion of his parting visit in the Tuileries.

'The conversation first touched upon the Conferences which may possibly take place. The Emperor said that, in his opinion, Conferences on the basis of the treaties of 1852, such as England desired and Denmark proposed, would be quite useless, because, either the treaty of 1852 was still in force, and, in that case, it was the already existing starting point for the adjustment of affairs, or the treaty no longer existed, or had been rendered obsolete by events, and, in that case, it was absurd to represent it as the basis of the Conferences. To these very important remarks, the Emperor added that he trusted such Conferences would come to nothing, and asked whether the majority in the Diet considered them desirable, whereupon His Highness replied, that this could not be the case, as the Diet had, on a previous occasion, already protested against the treaty of 1852.

'The Emperor then passed on to the war which was being carried on by the two German Great Powers against Denmark, and which he deplored as useless, because the political aims

which the Great Powers pursued with their military operations, could never be such, as would be accepted by the Diet and the population of Schleswig-Holstein.

'The conversation now took a turn which indicated the Emperor's desire to ascertain what was now going to be done; an indirect question, to which His Highness could only reply by referring to the explanations he had given in previous conversations. At this moment, the countenance of the Emperor suddenly assumed an expression, which implied that some decisive resolution had been arrived at in his mind. Turning to His Highness, he said: "Ah, I have forgotten to thank you for your little memorandum." His Highness replied that he esteemed himself fortunate, by expounding his views, to have contributed to the information of the Emperor, whereupon the latter briefly rejoined in the following literal terms: "In the few words you have given me, you have so forcibly described what ought to be done, that I have accepted your view, and shall proceed at the Conferences in the manner you have indicated. But I am afraid I shall meet with great opposition."

'Upon this satisfactory declaration of the Emperor, His Highness said that the opposition of Austria and Prussia, being illogical in itself, must surely be easy to remove, since the argumentation with which these Powers had hitherto opposed the demands of the Confederation and Schleswig-Holstein, was, in substance, based upon the adherence of France to the treaty of 1852, and upon the possibility of a great war resulting therefrom. But the latter contingency was out of the question, if France took the part of Germany, because England would then stand alone in her negative position. The Emperor thereupon said, laughing: "It will most likely be said again, that I am wanting to conquer the Rhine. I hope, however, that men will at last have convinced themselves of my love of peace."

'The conversation then continued for a while without any special feature. But its chief points are recited in the foregoing remarks.

'From this conversation, His Highness draws the conclusion,

that the Emperor has arrived at the decision just indicated with regard to his attitude in the Schleswig-Holstein question, because, in the decided expression of will on the part of the population of Schleswig-Holstein, he recognises and respects the principle which brought himself to the throne of France, and because he desires, above all things, to avoid becoming involved in a conflict of tendencies with the sentiments of the German nation. His Highness thinks he is all the more justified in arriving at this conclusion, because the Emperor did not make the slightest allusion to any equivalent that France might be reckoning upon, but rather avoided, with the greatest tact, both in this and in his former conversations, all reference to the dispute existing between the German States. Nor indeed, did he utter a word which implied that he favoured one or the other party. It must be added here, that His Highness certainly took every opportunity that offered itself, to warn the Emperor most urgently against confounding the Schleswig-Holstein question with other interests and affairs which are alien to it.'

In the evening of the 19th of March, I left Paris, and repaired first to Frankfort, where I made use of a stay of a few hours to meet Samwer, who was at that time staying at the seat of the Diet, in order to convince himself of the desolate prospects which prevailed there for the Augustenburg cause. My personal interview with Samwer was therefore of great value, because I was here able to advert more positively to all those points, which I could scarcely discuss in writing, without incurring the suspicion of tutoring the Augustenburg policy. According to my convictions, the moment had now come, when the consequences of the experiences I had gained in Paris, were bound to be drawn speedily and resolutely, in one or the other direction.

The assertion of the Great Powers, that the solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question might involve a moment of warlike complications, had fallen to the ground. I was warranted in making use of the declarations of Louis Napoleon in all directions, and it would have been folly, after that, to have scented any danger in isolated England, whose opposition was

practically managed by Lord Palmerston. Under these circumstances, two courses presented themselves to the Augustenburg policy. It had either to step forward openly before the world, and force its adversaries to an undeniable act of violence, or it had to enter into Prussia's tendencies, and seek to effect a complete understanding with the King. To this end, the first step that suggested itself, was the voluntary renunciation, on the part of the Duke, of all those sovereign rights which the German rulers of my persuasion and tendency had, for years, desired to see conferred on the crown of Prussia, and of which renunciation the military convention that actually existed in law between my countries and Prussia, already afforded a pattern. If the Duke, supported by the feeling observed in his favour in Paris, declared himself unreservedly to the King of Prussia, there was not the slightest doubt, according to the King's character, that everything would be done on Prussia's part, to give as much consideration as possible to his actual rights. An adjustment of the political questions could not possibly fail, if the Duke of Augustenburg proved sufficiently yielding.

In the month of February, I, for my part, had seized the opportunity offered by the successes of the Prussian arms in Schleswig, to submit my sentiments at the foot of the throne. Without entering into a discussion of specifically Prussian affairs, I thought myself entitled, from the standpoint of Federal right, to communicate my views on the German questions to the King. I laid stress on the fact, that I considered it the duty of the sovereigns to make every sacrifice for the sake of our joint fatherland, and that, from this point of view, I imagined that the Schleswig-Holstein matter would be easy to solve. At the same time, I expressed the hope that the national glory which had just been obtained by the Prussian army, might become the means of effecting a friendly understanding.

As I had not the good fortune to be understood by the King in the way I had desired, I consequently renounced my intention of visiting Berlin at this juncture. It was the first time for many years that I had undertaken a journey to Paris,

without having previously shown myself at the Prussian Court, and discussed my journey there. Hence I was naturally unable, after my return, to make any use in Berlin of what I had seen and heard at the Court of the Tuileries.

In the meantime, the Prussian Government itself was coming more and more to the fore in the matter of the reform of the Confederation, and they could no longer deceive themselves in Vienna as to the fact that Herr von Bismarck was pursuing a far-reaching programme, which was sure to bring about the exclusion of Austria from the Confederation.

CHAPTER VII

ENGLAND'S ANTI-GERMAN POLICY.—LETTER FROM KING LEOPOLD.—LORD RUSSELL'S PROPOSAL TO CONVENE A CONGRESS.—DENMARK'S CONDITIONS.—PROGRESS OF THE DANISH WAR.—HERR VON BEUST IN LONDON.—LETTER FROM THE DUKE TO QUEEN VICTORIA.—THE QUEEN'S ANSWER.—DUKE FREDERICK'S 'DECLARATION OF RIGHTS.'—LETTER FROM QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE DUKE.—PRUSSIA'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE LONDON CONVENTION.—PRINCE LÖWENSTEIN AND HIS MISSION TO LONDON.—THE CONGRESS OF THE POWERS IN LONDON.—HERR VON BEUST'S REPORT.—END OF THE DANISH WAR.—THE DUKE WITH THE ENGLISH ROYAL FAMILY IN SCOTLAND.—THE UNVEILING OF THE ALBERT MEMORIAL IN PERTH.—THE DUKE'S IMPRESSIONS OF SCOTLAND.—IN BALMORAL.—PROPOSED MATCH BETWEEN PRINCE ELIMAR OF OLDENBURG AND AN ENGLISH PRINCESS.—FIRST SYMPTOMS OF THE ANNEXATION OF THE ELBE DUCHIES BY PRUSSIA.—DIPLOMATIC CONFLICT BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.—UNVEILING OF THE ALBERT MEMORIAL IN COBURG.—THE DUKE SUGGESTS A MARRIAGE BETWEEN PRINCE CHRISTIAN OF HOLSTEIN AND PRINCESS HELENA.—LETTER FROM DUKE FREDERICK TO THE DUKE OF COBURG.—DEATH OF KING LEOPOLD.—HIS CHARACTER AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE.

DURING half my life-time, I have regarded the strange hostility with which nearly all English Liberal Governments, and the greater part of the English public, have opposed German interests in the northern Duchies, as one of the most unaccountable phenomena in English politics. What agencies were at work in this play of elementary passions, and what seductive arts were employed in working upon so-called public opinion, will doubtless always remain buried in mystery. Least of all can any enlightenment on the subject be expected from such information as English memoirs and biographies afford us at the present day. Generally speaking,

it can only be said that those soar rather too high, who seek the explanation for the friendliness of the English towards the Danes in a series of great political considerations.

Although, in the conflicts of 1864, I was unable to recognise all the threads of a dissolute policy, the purpose of which was to stir up strife, I yet gained sufficient insight into the facts, to perceive that the lowest instincts of the English population, and great ignorance of continental affairs on the part of the public, were being counted upon. It was raised to a kind of dogma in England, that the German national movement was based upon an understanding with Louis Napoleon for the purpose of bestowing the Rhine provinces, and, at all events, Belgium, upon the French. In how great a measure public opinion was successfully excited by these assertions, of this I received a clear proof from the communications of King Leopold.

My uncle, who had the best sources at his command for ascertaining the state of English affairs, was so greatly agitated by the assurance with which these rumours were circulated, that he appeared to attach a certain importance to them.

'It is rather long,' he wrote on the 28th of January, at the time when Palmerston and Russell had commenced their anti-German action, 'since I have had any news of you. I have now heard one or two things from London, which have surprised me. It is said that the English have been told by the Germans, that Germany will exert every effort to secure the Duchies; that the Emperor will be appealed to for protection; and that Germany will sooner relinquish the left bank of the Rhine, and put the Emperor in possession of Belgium, than suffer any transaction with regard to the Duchies.

'Greater nonsense, I frankly confess, I have never heard in all my long life; the more so, indeed, as it is merely a question of Schleswig. They might as well advise the Emperor at once, to lend his assistance at sea and on land, and, in proof that the German movement is honestly disposed in its madness, request the occupation of Landau, Mayence,

Coblentz, and Luxembourg, by French troops. The German movement can then sing *finis Germaniae*, for, when these very excellent troops stand within four hours' distance from Frankfort, there can be no further question of German independence, either geographically, or politically.

'The loss of Germans of the oldest type, from whom Germany has after all derived her civilisation, amounts, I should think, to over five millions.'

As an excuse that things of this kind were considered possible in those days, one must take into consideration the feverish activity displayed by the London Foreign Office since the commencement of the year. All Europe was inundated with English despatches, which abounded, one more than the other, with menaces and importunate propositions.

After the failure of the proposals for a Conference, which had been made directly after the death of Frederick VII, France was called upon to declare categorically, whether she was inclined to co-operate in maintaining the stipulations of the treaty of 1852, and more particularly the integrity of the Danish monarchy.

Before Napoleon had flatly declined, on January 30, to afford any material assistance to Denmark in the event of a war with Germany, Lord Russell demanded formal declarations from Austria and Prussia, that they would, under all circumstances, adhere to the principle of the integrity of Denmark.

But, when the Danes, on the 6th of February, appealed for help to England, France, Russia, and Sweden, it was Lord Russell again, who was one of the first to refuse it.

After the allies had crossed over the frontier of Jutland, Lord Russell again adverted to his proposal for a Conference, which now aimed at re-establishing peace without a simultaneous truce of arms.

On the 15th of March, an English circular despatch was issued, which said: 'Not the pertinacity of Denmark, which is injured in its right as a State, but the incomprehensible obstinacy of Germany, actuates the latter in adopting measures, which will sooner or later make it our duty to intervene.' However, at that very moment, Lord Russell had the mis-

fortune to find that injured Denmark rejected his proposals for a Conference, whilst the German Great Powers were, on the whole, able to declare themselves agreeable to them.

On the 9th of February, the English Cabinet had to declare with regret: 'that it was highly imprudent on the part of Herr Monrad and Herr Quaade in Copenhagen, to reject a fair prospect of solving a question, for the sake of which all the Powers of Germany were ready to take up arms against Denmark, whilst, under the existing circumstances, neither France, nor Great Britain, nor Russia, nor Sweden, could fight for Denmark.

And when this spoilt child of English ministerial whims at last determined to accept the conference project, subject to all manner of conditions, Lord Russell pacified the world by saying that he did not view these conditions in the light of an absolute basis for the negotiations, but only in that of a basis desired by Denmark.

Hardly ever had England's prestige in European politics sunk lower than at this moment, and I thought I need have no hesitation in giving expression to this generally shared opinion in my letter to the Queen, to which I have already made reference. However, it lay in the nature of the matter, that the Queen, in her strictly constitutional conception of the subject, abided now, as she had done on former occasions, by the principle of not entering into a correspondence that was not in full harmony with the policy of her Cabinet.

The Conference was not again struck off the orders of the day. Since my visit to the Emperor of the French, I had looked forward to it with curiosity, but, in spite of all English threats, with my mind pretty much at ease. Austria and Prussia as might have been foreseen long ago, had not only maintained their standpoint of 1852, but were gradually beginning to modify their admissions with regard to the integrity of Denmark. Since the successes of the war, the Schleswig-Holstein question presented a very different aspect in Berlin, from that which it had borne two months before.

Austria's and Prussia's so-called binding declarations of the 31st of January and the 7th of March, now received a

fresh interpretation, according to which the belligerent Cabinets would not allow the integrity of the Danish monarchy to be touched, but were nevertheless determined to retain their liberty of action within the scope of this compass. It was quite compatible with the London protocol of 1852, so it was said, to propound the question, whether the relation in which the Duchies stood to the Danish crown, was that of a personal or real union. But seeing that Denmark would not attend the Conference on such conditions, the English Cabinet suggested that all parties should waive the setting up of a basis; a suggestion which Austria approved, because she hoped by this means to win over the German Confederation to the Conference.

At the sitting of the German Diet held on the 26th of March, England's invitation to Conferences without a basis was submitted, and, on the 14th of April, the Saxon Minister, Baron von Beust, was chosen to represent the Confederation.

Whilst the preparations for the Conference were approaching their end, the Prussian authorities at the seat of war took care that the Conference should not begin without the previous creation of a series of new facts. After the Danes had evacuated Jutland as far as the Lijm-Fjord, they only maintained the fortress Fridericia and their position at Düppel on the Continent.

Since the middle of March, the siege works had commenced at both points, and, on the 18th of April, the Prussians under the command of Prince Frederick Charles, stormed the intrenchments of Düppel. Four thousand men were taken prisoners, and the remainder of the Danish army withdrew to Alsen. A fortnight later, Fridericia was evacuated, after the cannon which had been used in the siege of Düppel, had begun to be employed against Fridericia.

Under these circumstances, every postponement of the sittings of the Conference, which had been formally opened on the 20th of April, was a gain to the German cause. As Herr von Beust had not yet appeared in London, the two German Great Powers refused to take part in the sittings, and it was not until the 25th that the Conferences could commence.

There were present, Count Apponyi with Herr von Biegeleben from Austria, Count Bernstorff with Herr von Balan from Prussia, Herr von Quaade, von Bille, and von Krieger, from Denmark, and Herr von Beust for the German Confederation. The Neutral Powers were represented by Russell, Clarendon, Prince Latour d'Auvergne, Baron Brunnow, and Count Wachtmeister (for Sweden).

Before his departure for London, Herr von Beust had expressed the desire that I should give him a special and personal letter of recommendation to Queen Victoria. I was all the more willing to accede to this request, as I was by this means enabled to express my opinion of English policy with full freedom. When Herr von Beust visited me on his way to London, I handed him the following letter:

'DEAREST VICTORIA,—The Saxon Minister, Count von Beust, who is known to you from former years, has asked me to give him a few lines recommending him to your gracious favour. We have elected him unanimously in the Diet to represent us at the Conferences, and he must be regarded there as the representative of German interests. The hopes and good wishes of the whole nation accompany him.

'It will depend upon his efforts, whether we shall succeed in making right and legitimacy respected, and in restoring to our people the feeling of contentment which it has so long been lacking.

'To know your Ministry on the side of our enemies, is a source of profound grief to us. It will depend upon the Conferences, whether the breach between England and Germany is to become still greater.

'With sincerest regards, etc:

'ERNEST.

'APRIL 19, 1864.'

Faithful to the constitutional standpoint adopted by her, the Queen, as was to be expected, gave by no means a direct answer to my letter. Only casually, in a family letter, the remark was dropped, that she had received Herr von Beust,

and thanked him for my letter. She assured me that her Government was on no account to be considered hostile to Germany, and that it would doubtless endeavour to proceed with impartiality and justice. The only thing it desired, she went on to say, was 'a settlement which would give as much satisfaction and as much security to all parties for future peace, as it is possible.' To this end, however, every one must show a disposition to be conciliatory.

Duke Frederick, on his part, had committed to paper a judicial protest, which he arranged to have delivered at the Conference. He was so fortunate as to secure Prince Löwenstein for this mission, and, as the Queen no doubt placed great faith in the friend of Prince Albert's youth, she grew more and more inclined to imbue her Cabinet, too, with her personally favourable views of the Schleswig-Holstein cause. It was in consequence frequently asserted in German circles, that the comparatively satisfactory results of the London Conference were not owing least to the influence of the Queen. She herself, however, protested very emphatically against this representation of the matter, and, a short time afterwards, wrote me a letter which cast a strong light upon the previous Conferences.

'There is one thing, however, which I am very anxious to say to you. You express yourself hopefully on the issue of the Conferences, and I will do so too. But please do not say that it will be owing to me personally, if peace is established. That I love Germany with all my heart,—(especially our part) —and that I have always done what I possibly could, to restore peace, and make an arrangement which may afford all parties a certain guarantee against the recurrence of such terrible wars,—this I do not deny. But I have always been at one with my Government, and I must strongly protest, when people attempt to separate me from it.

'I have lately been attacked here—which was still wanting in my sad position—on account of my German sympathies, and a few silly people have given out that I have been hindering the Government in its actions. I was excessively indignant, knowing very well how unjust such accusations

were. However, I was told in reply, that my German relatives had circulated these rumours in Germany. I am convinced that this is just as untrue. But nevertheless, I would most urgently request you not to mention me, nor lay any stress on the little merit I have had, as it might greatly aggravate my position, difficult and painful as it already is, and would not diminish the sad tension between the two countries—which is really to nobody's advantage,—and you can imagine how much I desire to see this sad tension soon vanish. God grant that Germany may show moderation at the Conferences which are still to take place; otherwise, the feeling in this country will be driven to the highest pitch. But, God willing, all will soon be brought to a happy end.'

It need hardly be said that I took every pains to justify the kind sentiments of the Queen. However, the rumours concerning a conflict of tendencies between the Queen and her Ministers had been chiefly set on foot by the incessant complaints of the English statesmen on that score.

The despatches that were sent to Kiel by the Schleswig-Holstein Ministers, were full of the very assertions against which the Queen protested. . English politicians and newspaper scribes endeavoured to aggravate this conflict, and to bring it to the Queen's knowledge again by way of the German Press. They hoped, by such artifices, to frustrate the Queen's kind intentions, or to convert them into quite the reverse. The parties in favour of the Danes appeared to consider every means justifiable, that helped to ruin the cause of the Duchies. However, these diplomates were just then miscalculating two factors, which shortly gave an unexpected turn to the negotiations of the Conference: Prussia and France.

As to the former, the English, in declaring the European equilibrium to be dependent on the integrity of Denmark, showed an ignorance, rare even in their own history, of what Germany, and, above all, Prussia, considered compatible with military honour. The under-estimation on the part of Denmark and England, of what had been created by the facts of the war, became so conspicuous in the discussions of the

Conference, that Prussia soon had cause to withdraw from the London Protocol. But English policy experienced a defeat which was almost greater still, by Louis Napoleon's unqualified advocacy of the national wishes of the Schleswig-Holsteiners.

That the Emperor of the French was determined to keep, in substance, what he had promised me on the 18th of March, was already evident from a despatch which he had addressed to London on the 20th. What surprised me most, however, was that, even in questions of detail, the French Government adhered, at the proceedings of the Conference, to the programme which I had recommended to the Emperor. This accord was shown more especially at the last sittings of the Conference, when the question as to the voting of the population of Schleswig-Holstein came to be discussed. In opposition to every other voice, the French Plenipotentiary expressed himself on this point chiefly in favour of questioning the population in the mixed districts, as he recognised, and, indeed, assumed as a matter of course, that the German portions of Schleswig must be separated from Denmark.

The part which England played at the Conferences, was felt all the more keenly in Germany, as chance would have it that, just in April, Garibaldi was received in London by all, even the highest, circles, with the most absurd distinctions, whilst, in respect to the German race on the Elbe and the Eyder, the protection of right and self-determination was left to the Emperor of the French.

In the meantime, Prince Löwenstein had returned from his mission to England, and had taken the impression away with him, that the cause of Duke Frederick must be considered as good as lost. He had neither succeeded in inducing Lord Russell to receive a deputation of Schleswig-Holsteiners, nor had the delivery of his 'Declaration of Rights,'—as Duke Frederick's memorial had been termed—produced any impression at the Conference.

In Löwenstein's opinion, Lord Russell, by the aid of French diplomacy, might have been made to change his mind But Lord Palmerston proved himself an inflexible opponent of Germany.

'Since I had the honour of seeing you,' Prince Löwenstein wrote to me on the 14th of May, 'I have been in Kiel and London, at the desire of the Duke of Holstein, in order to ascertain in the latter town, what could be done for him. Owing to the well-known disposition of the English Ministry, and the pigheadedness of the English Press, there is nothing very satisfactory to be attained in London. There is only one thing before which they bow down, and that is an accomplished fact. Besides, the Ministry is not at one in the Schleswig-Holstein question. Lord Palmerston, however, who is Germany's most ardent adversary in that question, still adheres firmly to his London Protocol.

'My endeavours, and those of the other Schleswig-Holsteiners present in London, were aimed at giving effect to the proposal, that the Duchies themselves should decide their future fate. Lord Russell did not appear to be so averse to this proposal, as I had expected. Others, too, are in favour of it, but Lord Palmerston, who knows very well that it would cause his artificial handiwork to collapse, resists it with all his might. It is a question of his existence as Minister, hence the fury of the Palmerstonian organs. The deputation, as you know, had little success. The further course of the matter will be chiefly determined by France's attitude. Until now, nothing is lost, and nothing gained.'

The latter remark of Prince Löwenstein's received a suitable explanation in the fact, that, in the first half of May, the Prussian Ambassador, Count Bernstorff, thought he could not even venture to present Count Rantzau, a Holstein nobleman, to the Queen, unless he appeared in Prussian uniform. Prince Löwenstein, who informed the Queen in Osborne of this incident, was told by her in reply, that the Prussian Ambassador might have safely ventured an attempt of this kind, even without the uniform. But Count Bernstorff still declared himself unable to act in a matter which might be construed as a demonstration in favour of Schleswig-Holstein.

Meanwhile, the London Conference, after deliberating for six weeks, had advanced to its sixth sitting, at which the proposals of the two German Powers for a definite separation

of the Duchies from Denmark were made. Russia, England, and Denmark, vied in violent declarations and empty menaces, but were nevertheless unable to escape from the discussion of an eventual division-line in the Duchy of Schleswig. Apenrade, Tondern, Flensburg, Hoyer, and various other boundaries, were proposed for Russia's and England's protegé, but without even the faintest understanding being arrived at between the contending parties.

Towards the end of May, Herr von Beust went to Paris, in order to give effect to the views of the Diet at the Court of the Tuileries. However, the accounts he sent to the Federal Assembly were not couched in very consoling terms. He had, he wrote, represented the German standpoint to the Emperor, as he hoped, not unsuccessfully, and could only praise the calm impartiality of the Emperor and his Minister. The feeling in the country, on the other hand, was not friendly. When he took leave, the Emperor said to him: '*Il faut prendre les faits tels qu'ils sont.*'

Not uninteresting was what was reported to me of Herr von Beust's accounts of the sittings of the Conference itself. On the 28th of May, the Russian Ambassador complained very vehemently of the behaviour of the German Powers, and reproached them with being double-tongued and undecided. He declared that his Government was firmly opposed to them, and said that he would not discuss the disposal of countries which belonged to the King of Denmark, so long as they were not ceded by their rightful owner. Even then, the pretensions of all other competent claimants would have to be discussed first. The Danish negotiators sometimes made use of such insulting expressions, that Count Bernstorff appealed to Lord Clarendon to call them to order. Beust therefore cautioned Germany against stretching her demands, because he feared that France might, in that case, be driven into the Danish camp. He desired also to afford the English Ministers the possibility of satisfying Parliament and public opinion in England by referring to the cession of a part of North Schleswig. Above all, however, Herr von Beust now strongly dissuaded the Federal Assembly from proclaiming its recogni-

tion of the Duke of Augustenburg because it would thereby expose itself to the not unfounded reproach of anticipating the European Conference in its decisions.

A few weeks later, on the 25th of June, the Conference was closed, without having achieved the slightest result. The Queen of England informed her Cabinet, that, in the event of war breaking out again, she would never give her consent to England's participation in it, and authorised Lord Palmerston to dissolve Parliament, in case the Opposition should carry a vote of censure against the pacific policy of the Government.

At last, after fresh bloody battles, a treaty of peace was concluded between Denmark and Austro-Prussia, by which all questions of right and hereditary succession were waived, and the Duchies simply ceded to the victorious Great Powers. This solution, as is well known, had been arrived at in Vienna on the 1st of August, according to the simplest principles *de jure belli et pacis*, although the difficult question could not be overlooked, how the Great Powers would henceforth manage to agree among themselves on their joint possession.

At this juncture, I undertook a journey to Scotland with my wife, for the purpose of visiting Queen Victoria, which, after a year of such great turbulence, uncertainty, and excitement, afforded us, both in body and in mind, a truly necessary recreation.

On the 21st of August, I travelled *via* Mayence and Forbach to Paris, where I awaited the Duchess, who arrived on the 27th. On the same day, at seven o'clock in the evening, we arrived after a boisterous passage in Windsor. We found the Queen in full preparation for her journey to Scotland, which she seemed to be looking forward to with particular pleasure, on account of our accompanying her. We spent the 28th and 29th of August in the private circle of the Royal Family, and left for Perth in the evening with the Queen, the Royal children, and the whole Court. The town was preparing for the ceremony of unveiling a splendid statue of my good brother, and the Queen was received with immense enthusiasm. In the early morning, an innumerable crowd of people was streaming along the beautiful and pleasant valley

in which the capital of Perthshire lies, to the railway stations, to welcome the Royal special train wherever it passed. The ancient Royal residence had donned its richest attire, and an enormous flag waved down from Gowrie Castle, which the English have converted into a barrack.

Soon after our arrival in Perth, the Queen repaired to the principal square, where the beautiful memorial had been erected, and was waiting to be unveiled. On this occasion, I heard the Queen for the first time speak publicly before the people. She spoke on the open space so audibly and unembarrassed, and in such warm tones, that one could well understand the enthusiasm with which she was greeted, and which only rose to a still higher pitch, when the excellent bronze likeness of the Prince looked down from its massive pedestal upon the animated crowd. It was a never-to-be-forgotten moment. The Scotch costume, in which Prince Albert is represented in large size, created an incomparably picturesque impression in the midst of these Highland surroundings. The Queen, whose inextinguishable grief was coupled with so much sense of duty and with so noble a bearing, could scarcely conceal her emotion, and we stood around her deeply moved at the sight of the Royal widow and her Prince Consort, who was immortalised here in such life-like shape.

After the ceremony was concluded, the Provost of Perth was dubbed a knight by the Queen, a ceremony at which the ancient forms are still faithfully preserved in England. There was no mistaking the fact, on this occasion, that the Queen enjoyed an affection in the Scotch Highlands, which has scarcely been known since the days of the Stuarts, and that my brother's happy idea of founding a homestead in Balmoral for the Royal Family had borne wonderful fruits. The Scotch have always shown themselves sensible to the interest taken in their peculiarities and, as they call it, their nationality. Like the inhabitants of the Alps, they set great store in the Highlands on seeing their manners and old customs loved and appreciated.

Also in their character, the sons of the Scotch hills afford

various points of comparison with the inhabitants of the German and Swiss mountains. But nature and scenery make an entirely different impression. I cannot assert that I ever really experienced the sensation of anything grand and overwhelming during my tours and wanderings on numerous excursions and shooting expeditions. The chain of mountains which shuts off the horizon in the north and north-west of the province, whence the blackish stream of the Tay flows through fertile valleys past the capital Perth to the Firth of the Tay, is usually pictured in our imagination as more gigantic and wildly romantic than it actually is. In vain do we experience, time after time, that the Grampian hills rise nowhere above the height of our German central mountains. The lively descriptions of the treeless heights and dark rocks always seek to awaken our recollections of the scenery of the Alps, in spite of there being no similarity between them. It must be regarded as a nature quite unique in its kind, in which the far-extending moor-land with its wonderful tints, and the black lakes with their marshy sub-soil, afford so particularly charming a landscape.

I had heard a great deal about the sough of the moors, which is described so frequently in Ossian's poems. When I heard this humming for the first time in an immeasurable wilderness, it seemed to me like the sound of Æolian harps. It is believed, that this strange sound is caused by a low current of wind passing through the heather. Interesting though this play of nature is, it after all gives a still more melancholy tone to the gloomy landscape.

After having left Perth on the 30th of August, we gained, that same day, a full view of the highest Scotch mountains. At that time, the railway only extended as far as the borough of Aboyne in Aberdeenshire. The journey from there went over Ballater by post-chaise to Balmoral, where we arrived at six o'clock.

The next day, we began deer-stalking with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh, the latter having just returned from a journey to Norway. We made long excursions on horseback and on foot, and remained until the 17th

of September in the homely family circle of the Queen, who was loath to part from us.

I need hardly say that, during this long stay in the solitary castle in the Highlands, it could only have been by a violent effort, and at the express command of the Queen, had I refrained from discussing the political situation in all directions. However, as matters had now shaped themselves, the Queen appeared not unwilling to converse with me about the German questions. In face of the assurance which she always reiterated, both in her letters and verbally, that she regarded it as her highest task to find out what Prince Albert, if he were alive, would have advised, it was natural that I, as one who had been familiar with the sentiments and views of my brother, more especially on the subject of German affairs, had some right to be listened to.

An interesting episode took place at that time in England, with regard to the project of a marriage between Prince Elimar and a daughter of the Queen, which was contemplated in Oldenburg. I do not know how this matter came to the knowledge of anyone in Kiel. But, after my return from England, Duke Frederick asked me, not without anxiety, what truth there was in the news. The scheme had very quickly fallen through again. But it had existed, and bore witness to a combination into which certain people would have been glad to draw the English Court.

In the meantime, the most alarming accounts arrived of the events that had taken place in the Diet. On the 29th of November, the Federal General von Hake telegraphed from Altona, that the Prussians on their return march from Schleswig had occupied the military roads in Holstein, and concentrated twelve battalions of infantry and four squadrons of cavalry round about Altona. On the same day, Prussia demanded that Saxony and Hanover should evacuate Holstein and Lauenburg, and withdraw the Federal executory troops. At the same time, the 13th Prussian division had been concentrated near Minden, and the 6th near Berlin. Whilst Hanover immediately complied with Prussia's demands, voting in the Federal Assembly all at once as Prussia's most faithful

adherent, and pouring all the vials of her Welfish wrath upon Duke Frederick of Holstein, Saxony assumed a war-like attitude, had her military treasure conveyed from Dresden to the fortress of Königstein, and recalled the soldiers who were on leave of absence. The situation reminded one of the time of Bronzell. In Bavaria, after the change in the Austrian Ministry, Herr von der Pfordten took over the Foreign Office, and gave free scope to the hatred against Prussia, which had been accumulating within him in the Diet.

The Middle States were working, openly and secretly, with a view to establishing a separate Confederacy, and at last carrying out their darling idea of the Trias. In spite of Mensdorff's leadership, Prussia succeeded, now as ever, in retaining the Austrian Cabinet, from step to step, in the conflict with the Federal Assembly, and, in the days when the events which I have just described took place in Holstein, the presiding Ambassador in the Diet supported all Prussia's motions.

Letters were talked of, in which the two monarchs of Austria and Prussia had been quite privately discussing the pending questions; and indeed, there was every reason to speak of the strong diplomatic conflict that was raging between Vienna and Berlin. With regard to the events in the Diet, all these inner processes were without weight and effect. It seemed determined in the Council of the Gods, that this old and rotten institution should approach its end in the most undignified manner imaginable. Prussia's action was based on the terms of the definite peace of Vienna, which had been concluded on the 30th of October, and was submitted to the Assembly at the sitting of the Diet held on the 29th of November. Based on Article 3 of the treaty, Austria and Prussia moved that the executory proceedings of the Confederation in Holstein should be declared at an end.

After some hesitation, the Federal Assembly declared that it would vote on the subject on the 5th of December. On the same day, Austria proposed to Prussia that she should deliver the Duchies to Duke Frederick, as the claimant who was supported by the best evidence of right, and refer the rest of

the pretenders to a Court of Adjustment. On the 13th of December, however, the Prussian Ambassador at the Diet firmly rejected these Austrian proposals, so long as Prussia's future position in the Duchies had not been determined.

At the beginning of the year 1865, the symptoms of an impending Prussian annexation of the Elbe Duchies increased on every side. At the same time, disputes of a more and more threatening and dangerous character arose in the administration of the Duchies between the Prussian and the Austrian Commissaries, and everyone was convinced that affairs could not be carried on in this way any longer. In the course of the summer, a rupture between the two Powers was no longer considered unlikely, and the maintenance of peace was only secured by the personal sentiments of the allied monarchs.

On the 19th of August, the Convention of Gastein was signed in Salzburg by the two monarchs, who, by this fresh personal meeting, desired once more to afford a proof of the value they attached to a mutual understanding.

In the summer of the year 1865, I was fortunate enough to be able to absent myself from the very unpleasant spectacle of these diplomatic complications and chess-moves. In the month of August, the greater part of my widely-connected family assembled in Coburg. On the birthday of my late brother, the unveiling of the beautiful memorial was to take place, which love and reverence had erected to the Prince Consort of England on the market-place of his native town. May the only bronze statue which exists of him on the German soil he loved so much, still remind later generations, how much this German Prince did for his fatherland! The Queen of England was present with nearly all her children at the ceremony of unveiling the statue. She had taken up her abode at the Rosenau since the 11th of August. The Prince of Wales came with his consort. The Crown Prince and the Crown Princess of Prussia, and the hereditary Grand-Duke of Hesse and his wife Alice, were also present, and the family of Prince Augustus, as well as the Duchess of Holstein and Prince Christian, the Duke of Cambridge, Prince Hermann

Hohenlohe, and many other princely persons, took part in the festivities. We counted four and twenty persons belonging to the family.

The unveiling of the statue took place on the 26th of August, at half-past three o'clock, the weather being glorious. When, at a signal given by me, the covering dropped, and the very successful statue of the Prince was presented to the view of the dense crowd, loud cheers were raised.

During these festive days, I had the opportunity of starting the project of a union between Prince Christian of Holstein and the third daughter of Queen Victoria, Princess Helena.

In a letter to me, which, among other things, contained also an account of the state of affairs in the Duchies, Duke Frederick expressed his sense of the favourable circumstances which such a connection was likely to produce for this excellent and much afflicted family, more particularly in view of the political distress which was now again threatening it:

'I cannot let Tempeltey leave, without giving him a few lines for you, which are intended to express to you my best thanks for your last letter. . . . I wish with all my heart that the matter may be brought to a happy end. . . . As to the state of affairs here, Tempeltey will give you a detailed report. Gablentz is a soldier without any knowledge of affairs, and has obviously instructions to show himself obliging to the Prussians. There is evidently some danger in this, especially as the Prussians are taking the greatest pains to capture him. In Berlin, he was overwhelmed with attentions: here, Manteuffel received him. To-day, Roon is here, in order not to let him get cool, and to-morrow Manteuffel returns. I hope, however, that he will soon see the real position of affairs. But the chief thing is the firm mind of the people, which, with God's help, will remain proof against all temptations and intrigues.'

Unfortunately, the Duke, up to the last hours of his stay in Kiel, had not been accurately acquainted with the feeling in wider Schleswig-Holstein circles. Besides, the confidence

of his counsellors in the policy of Vienna remained in substance unshaken, and, as far as the person of Count Mensdorff was concerned, this may not have been altogether unjustified.

As for myself and my house, the old year was not to end without the most irreparable loss that I had experienced since my brother's death.

On the 10th of December, 1865, King Leopold I of Belgium died. It seemed as if the old European system of States was about to be dissolved, not only in its principles, but also in its most eminent representatives personally.

The fatal news reached me from Brussels the same evening. The sympathy in the loss sustained by our house, was quite exceptional, not only in the little country where the cradle of this rare Prince had stood, but all over Europe, where he had been credited with an influence on the constitutional development of the States, that was sometimes over-rated. The personality of the King, who, for nearly sixty years, through a singular connection of things, had taken part, and been more or less directly interested, in all the really great events of Europe, has never yet been described with historical accuracy. What was written about him in Belgium and England, was mostly confined to his relations with those countries. In Germany, a full knowledge of the King was only to be found in a limited circle. Beyond this, every kind of prejudice and false conception of his whole character was met with. Since the death of Prince Metternich, King Leopold was looked upon, here and there, as a political oracle, from which the best information could be obtained concerning the popular and liberal tendencies of the educated and wealthy classes.

His clever and calm way of discussing events, secured him everywhere an influence of a more morally than politically effective nature. In latter years, he made no secret to anybody of the fact, that the course of events appeared to him extremely perverse and alarming. He beheld the increasing preponderance of Imperialism growing out of the differences between the German Powers. He took it almost as a personal affront when, in latter months, even in serious papers, the question of a division of Belgium between France and Prussia

was discussed. The King had, by nature, in all matters a leaning towards compromise. But he demanded, from the outset, the absolute recognition of the limits of justice and fairness, and he could grow angry with individuals as well as with men generally, when these were offended against.

My uncle had anything but a high inward esteem for that which changeable public opinion is wont to bring forth with the day; and if those had really known him, who usually think that the liberal sentiments of statesmen show themselves by submitting to general opinion, they would no doubt have considered him one of the most illiberal sovereigns of Europe.

He was very much inclined to smile at, and ridicule in a mild form, what in political matters usually appears on the surface in the shape of so-called general opinion. He was ever an enemy of all extreme views and measures, and, in a manner, himself the personification of the Aristotelian measure in all things. His aversion to the ultramontane attempts at reviving past times, is sufficiently well-known. But, in latter times, he was just as angry with the Belgian Liberals, and censured their harsh proceedings against the Catholic feelings of the population. 'I am fearfully annoyed with my Ministers,' so he wrote to me in November, 1864, 'who, under the influence of the Radical clubs, are doing things which can only be fatal to the future of the country. Strange, that men find it so hard to bear conditions of great happiness.' He complained particularly, that 'the really devoted Catholic population was oppressed *sans rien et raison*. The madness of this surpassed all conception.'

It may be said that, besides a sharply pronounced sense of justice, the King also possessed a lively conception of the ambiguous word freedom, by which he kept the parties on both sides within bounds. In an article which I myself wrote for a native newspaper, after the death of the King, I expressed my view of his political standing in the following terms:

'This was the King's greatness, that, appointed as the protector and guardian of a State which was just rising—that is, of a powerless, politically and religiously divided, State, he recognised with a sure eye that its sole salvation lay in the

fundamental principle of justice and liberty. He understood his time and its demands. In a certain measure the supporter of modern constitutional life, he raised his young State, by the sincerity of his devotion to the institutions of the country, and by the firmness of his character, which he proved towards all parties, to that pattern State upon which the other nations of the Continent look with longing envy, and which, in mighty catastrophes, when centenarian thrones were trembling, stood untouched and at one with itself.'

However, this way of thinking on the King's part had nothing in common with those despotic tendencies to promote general happiness, which are sometimes bent on forcing a certain system of philosophic views upon the nations. The King's mind was a stranger to all doctrinairism. He could understand those people least of all, who, by endless improving, reforming, and revolutionising, manage to cause themselves and others the greatest sufferings. For, regarded from every side, his was a free and liberal nature, which, while coupled with the greatest benevolence, knew how to respect the liberty of everybody else to the very utmost limits possible.

He had much taste for domestic life, and it is quite true that, after the death of his first wife, he lived through a series of the gloomiest years, before ascending the Belgian throne. During this period of comparatively trifling political activity, the singularly contemplative manner was probably formed, of which a caricatured picture has been given in a few romantic writings which treat of the King. He was a man without strong passions. He used to say: 'We have commonly no enemy for all our life, but also rarely a friend with whom we agree in everything.' Thus he was fond of expatiating with philosophic composure, and with a touch of humour, on men and things of this world. By such conversations, he made an impression on politicians, scholars, and artists of every kind and description, and, most of all, just upon those who followed essentially different and particularly pronounced views. The King inspired everybody with a sympathy which was not to be denied, and which wavered between deep veneration and sincere love. He possessed great taste for art, and especially

for the art of painting, the flourishing of which in Belgium went hand in hand with the part he personally took in all artistic endeavours. He had a natural talent for music, and was possessed, too, of very considerable knowledge in the multifarious provinces of science. But, above all, he had an unusual store of experiences, which he kept well arranged in his memory, ready at all times to apply them to new facts.

His immensely extensive reading embraced chiefly memoirs and political writings, as well as the whole range of modern, and more particularly English, fine literature. So strong a culture of the mind gave him, in spite of the fact that the education of his youth in the war-years of the French Revolution could scarcely be termed a very careful one, an extraordinary security in his knowledge of other men. He penetrated those with whom he came into contact, to the innermost recesses of their hearts, but he scarcely ever entertained a prejudice or a hostile feeling against anyone. His interest in people was, above all, always humane, and only in a secondary sense political.

His military recollections belonged to the most valuable inventory of his life. He preserved, too, a full understanding for military affairs, and in his army, so far as his means allowed, he manifested no small talent for organisation. In the last years of his life, he followed the fate of his children in Mexico with great satisfaction. It was he who first started the idea of forming a Belgian and an Austrian legion, and he considered that, if the worst should happen, the safety of the Empire would by this means be ensured. It was, indeed, fortunate for him that he did not live to see the speedy collapse of these hopes.

And finally, since I must say a few words about my personal relations to my dear uncle, I think I may call them the most affectionate that can be imagined in any family. I still preserve, with sincerest pleasure, the copious correspondence, extending over many years, from which it has now, probably for the first time, been possible to give really characteristic accounts of his views and sentiments. In the last months of his life, my excellent uncle wrote to me in his

faithful love: 'You are nearest to me of all my relatives, and, in my fancy, I see your dear brown eyes, which are so true and sincere in their expression.'

To me, he was the kindest and most honest counsellor I ever had, and likewise the most indulgent critic. He could understand my views of life like a fatherly friend, and he mostly shared them. While he never shirked the trouble of seeking and finding the motives of my actions—a thing which is so rarely vouchsafed to us in life—his sincere love for me enabled him nearly always to accompany me on my paths and in my ideas.

A long and serious kidney disease troubled the evening of the strong-minded King's life. But he bore pain and operations with extraordinary patience, and with a sense of the pleasures of life that was indestructible. His just complaints about his own infirmity mostly merged into a kind of unselfish pity for human nature and its weakness. Those who surrounded him, could not say enough of the calm and courageous way, with which, even in the last stages of his illness, when his consciousness was unimpaired, he saw his death approaching. He died so peacefully, that his family, who were present, and his old friend Jules van Praedt, whose hand he had desired once more to press in his, hardly noticed when he breathed his last.

Nothing was more painful to me, than the fact that I was prevented by a serious indisposition from personally attending the funeral of my dear uncle. Whilst in Brussels the noble deceased was being laid in the vault of the Royal race which he had founded, we in Coburg, too, gave expression to the sincere national grief by the tolling of bells and a solemn funeral ceremony.

CHAPTER VIII

THE POLITICAL STATE OF EUROPE AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR 1865.—GROWING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.—WAR-LIKE MEASURES IN PRUSSIA.—ALLIANCE BETWEEN PRUSSIA AND ITALY.—AUSTRIA'S MOVE AGAINST PRUSSIA IN THE GERMAN DIET.—COUNT BISMARCK'S COUNTER-MOVE.—PRUSSIA'S PROPOSAL TO CONVOKE A GERMAN PARLIAMENT.—THE SITUATION BECOMES CRITICAL.—GENERAL PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.—THE DUKE SEEKS AN UNDERSTANDING WITH PRUSSIA.—HERR VON REUTER IN BERLIN.—HIS AUDIENCE WITH KING WILLIAM.—THE DUKE GOES TO BERLIN.—HIS INTERVIEWS WITH THE KING OF PRUSSIA, COUNT BISMARCK, AND HERR VON SCHLEINITZ.—THE FAMILY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE AUSTRIAN AND PRUSSIAN COURTS.—THE DUKE RECOMMENDS GENERAL VON BLUMENTHAL TO THE KING AND THE CROWN PRINCE.—HIS PARTING FROM KING WILLIAM.

In politics, at the end of the year 1865, a general lassitude seemed to have set in. On all sides, men had the unpleasant sensation of being lost in a diplomatic blind alley. Every party beheld itself arrived at a point, where there was no advancing and no receding by means of negotiations. They stood, as it were, before nothing but walls, behind which nought could lie but war.

After the 26th of January, the despatch-war between Austria and Prussia began to assume a more and more serious character. In a despatch, which was soon after made public, Count Bismarck subjected Austria's entire system of government in Holstein to a trenchant criticism, and declared it to be detrimental to conservative interests. In February, people thought the sudden closing of the Prussian Diet in Berlin could only be construed as a symptom that the Government had decided on taking energetic measures against Austria.

A Royal Cabinet order of the 15th had decreed the calling in of 40,000 men of the Landwehr on the 15th of May. The newspapers told of Councils of Ministers, to which the Governor of Schleswig, General von Manteuffel, the Chief of the General Staff von Moltke, the Chief of the Military Cabinet Colonel von Tresckow, and the Aide-de-Camp-General of the King, had been summoned. Public opinion gradually became accustomed to the idea of an impending war.

The relations to Italy took a very decided shape, nor was the fact without significance, that, in January, King William had sent the order of the Black Eagle to King Victor Immanuel. Since the 10th of March, the Italian General Govone had been staying in Berlin, for the purpose of treating for the Prusso-Italian alliance, and at the end of the month people were convinced that this alliance had really been concluded.

Austria, on the other hand, had instructed Count Karolyi, on the 17th of March, to enquire definitely of Count Bismarck, whether it was Prussia's intention violently to tear up the Convention of Gastein, and to break the peace between the German Federal States guaranteed by the territorial laws. Mutual accusations of the two Powers in the newspaper press, concerning the commencement of preparations for war, accompanied this uncordial method of conducting affairs on the part of the diplomatists.

However, the most serious symptom of Austria's intentions was undoubtedly a circular despatch of the 16th of March to our German Courts, in which intimation was given, that weighty proposals would be made to the Diet by the presiding Power. The Austrian Government adverted to Article 9 of the Act of Confederation, and Article 19 of the Act of Vienna, according to which the members of the Confederation bind themselves not to wage war among each other under any pretence whatsoever, and the Federal Assembly is entitled to adopt provisional measures to prevent any kind of self-help, and to put a stop to such as should be resorted to. The drift of Austria's apparent determination to prevail upon the Confederation to put the said paragraphs in force, in case Prussia

should not give sufficient explanations regarding her war-like tendencies, was to expose Prussia to the danger of executive measures on the part of the Confederation. But Count Bismarck was naturally little disposed to let himself be driven into so unfavourable a situation, which, in the eyes of foreign countries, appeared so equivocal. He knew how to select a better standpoint from which to let the *casus belli* approach him. His answer did not permit of the interpretation that it was he who intended war and self-help. But this proceeding of Austria afforded him an opportunity to address himself to the separate German Governments with the question, what position they would take up towards Prussia, in the event of a war-like complication.

His circular despatch of the 24th of March was one of the happiest chess-moves in this complicated game of the Cabinets. He summed up the points of dispute which existed between Austria and Prussia, and proved, on his part, the defensive character of the Prussian preparations. He showed that the dispute lay outside the affairs of the Confederation, and called upon the German Governments to come to an understanding with Prussia with regard to a reform of the Confederation. He referred them, at the same time, to the fate of Poland, in case they should not regard the interest of Germany and Prussia as identical.

That the German Governments, almost without exception, gave an unfavourable answer to Prussia's clever and significant enquiry, had the effect of causing Austria to place a faith in the action commenced by her, which must be reckoned among the most unhappy delusions of that much harassed State.

Meanwhile, the situation changed again after a few days, and the symptoms of a national movement which was being prepared on the part of the Prussian Cabinet, grew more manifest every day. On the 9th of April, Herr von Savigny moved on behalf of Prussia in the Federal Assembly, to convoke a Parliament, elected by the people on the principle of universal suffrage, for the reform of the Federal Constitution.

When, on the 11th of May, the Federal Reform Committee had at last constituted itself in Frankfort, and it was to be decided whether the convocation of a Parliament was to become a fact or not, the confusion in the political views of the German nation and its statesmen probably reached its highest pitch. I knew at that moment that every man now depended upon himself, and was placed before an important determination. It was as difficult, perhaps, to find good counsel, as it was to give any.

Besides the Parliament question, it now became my task to keep a sharp look-out on the course of the purely military preparations for the war, in order to choose the right moment when I might join the Prussian cause with dignity, and offer the King my services. Since the beginning of May, I had given up nearly all hope that peace would be maintained.

Only to recall the outward course of things, even the commonest newspaper had gradually become familiar with the idea of a war. Every day, the papers were bringing forth more and more threatening Notes of the two Great Powers. There has hardly been another war in our century, which was introduced with such a countless number of diplomatic Notes and mutual recriminations, as that of 1866.

For many weeks, the picture that presented itself, was one of incessant to and fro. Since the beginning of March, the preparations for war had been continued without interruption, in Austria openly, and in Prussia all on the quiet. On the 15th of March, the rumour was spread by the newspapers, that the Austrian Master of the Ordnance Benedek had been placed at the head of an army which was being concentrated in Bohemia, whilst Prussia was arming the Silesian fortresses. The newspapers connected with the Prussian Government were already beginning to speak of Saxon war preparations. However, towards the end of the month, and in the beginning of April, Austria and Prussia again outvied one another in pacific assurances, and, on the 7th, Count Mensdorff, the Austrian Prime Minister, declared that Austria had no grounds for any further preparations, but demanded, on her part, that the order to mobilise, which had been issued in Prussia on the

28th, should be rescinded. However, on the 15th of April, Prussia demanded that Austria, having armed first, should also be the first to disarm. Hereupon Austria declared, on the 18th of April, in order to give an ocular proof of her love of peace, that she was really willing to disarm first, provided she received the distinct promise that Prussia would do the same on the following day, or at all events the day after.

The answer of the Prussian Cabinet was not long in coming, and demanded an authentic assurance that the Emperor had given instructions to rescind the dislocation of the troops made in furtherance of Austria's measures of war against Prussia. It was also taken for granted that the military preparations which had been commenced by other German Governments, would be discontinued. Meanwhile, a complication had arisen, owing to the Prusso-Italian alliance, which appeared almost completely to preclude the maintenance of peace. For, even had there been a possibility of reconciling Prussia and Austria, the official communication made by Count Karolyi in Berlin, with regard to the measures adopted by Austria against Italy, removed all idea of a peaceful turn of events.

Count Bismarck now of course declared that the disarming of Austria must refer to Italy as well as to Prussia. Hereby, the league of the two Powers, at least as a league defensive, was openly declared. In consequence of the measures taken by Austria, it was decided in Florence on the 28th of April to prepare for war.

On the previous day, Prussia had issued a formal ultimatum to Saxony, owing to the warlike preparations that had been commenced there. Herr von Beust's answer was of considerable length, and, since they not only avowed simultaneously in Prussia and in Italy that they were preparing for war against Austria, but also refused to disarm, the actual setting in of hostilities might be expected at any moment.

In consideration of the military position of my countries, which were connected with Prussia by the Convention, I now saw myself induced to seek a personal understanding with the Prussian Court without further delay. On May 14, when

Herr von Seebach returned from Bamberg, where he had been attending the Conference of the Middle States, I was able to inform him that I had sent my aid-de-camp, Herr von Reuter, to Berlin, and that he had met with an extremely welcome reception there. On the 10th of May, Herr von Reuter had proceeded *via* Magdeburg to Berlin, where he informed General von Tresckow, the following day, of the instructions he had received from me, and requested an audience of His Majesty the King. He was received by the latter, on the 12th of May, at a quarter to four o'clock, and made the following note of this event:—'I said that, in view of the impending momentous events, Your Highness had sent me to offer your services in the army. The King appeared greatly pleased, and said more than once, that, judging by the course of things and the votes in Frankfort, he had been obliged to think that Your Highness would go over to the side of his enemies.

'His Majesty then gave a cursory sketch of Austrian policy since the treaty of Gastein, and concluded by saying how correct events had proved him to have been in reference to the preparations of Austria and the aggression that had threatened, and was still ever threatening, from there. He laid particular weight, too, on the fact that Prussia had waited a whole fortnight with her counter-preparations.

'On being asked about the contingent, I replied that it would follow Your Highness, and would be at the disposal of His Majesty.

'The question now arose, as to which side should take the first steps in this matter, and I suggested that the initiative had best be taken in Berlin. With regard to the question, what would be the probable attitude of the other Thuringian contingents, I was unable to give any information.

'Finally, the King remarked, in reference to Your Highness coming to Berlin, that the Congress proposed by Napoleon appeared, just now, likely to be realised. But, as soon as the war became imminent, and the posts of command were settled, the King would write to you, and it would then be desirable

that Your Highness should come to Berlin at once, and definitely prepared for the war.'

In order, at all events, to place myself immediately at the King's disposal, I sent my second aid-de-camp, Herr von Schleinitz, a week afterwards to Berlin, and instructed him to take orders respecting my person as well as my contingent. In the meantime, however, an occasion which took me personally to Berlin, came much sooner than I had ever expected. On the 12th of April, 1866, a daughter was born to the Crown Prince. On the 16th of May, I received a friendly invitation to attend the christening, which had been fixed for the 24th of May, the birthday of the Queen of England. I was the more pleased at this opportunity of appearing at the Prussian Court, as I had every reason for wishing to discuss the conditions of the Alliance which was now to be effected. The difficulty of the position in which the Government of one of the smallest of the Federal States beheld itself placed, lay in the fact that it was impossible to follow the military preparations which the great, and even the middle-sized, States had openly commenced, so long as the Federal Convention still legally existed. Owing to these circumstances, my journey to Berlin became a subject of political importance, and was not left unnoticed at the different German Courts. In Saxon as well as in South German newspapers, a regular storm was raised against me. Both on the part of Austria, and of many who, on other occasions, had stood by me under the national flag, everything was done to place my determination in the most unfavourable light. It was a time when the worst passions were let loose, and the system of proscriptions, which, since the days of the Romans, have always been the heritage of all civil wars, appeared to be becoming the order of the day again.

On the 21st of May, I went from Coburg to Gotha, in order to discuss the altered position of affairs with Herr von Seebach, before my stay in Berlin. In the night of the 23rd, I travelled by rail to Grossbeeren, where a Royal carriage awaited me, and conveyed me direct to Potsdam.

At noon the next day, the King was pleased to grant me

an audience, and the Crown Prince accompanied me to Berlin. The last time I had seen the King, was in the middle of September, at the manœuvres in Merseburg. But all trace of any former misunderstanding that may have existed between us, appeared to have long vanished from his brow. When I entered his room that day, he received me with the greatest kindness, saying that he had never allowed himself to be shaken in his conviction that, when the decisive moment arrived, I should stand on his side.

I naturally abstained from casting any retrospective glance on the development of events. When I expressed my opinion that the iron die would now have to decide matters, I observed with astonishment that the King was by no means yet inclined entirely to despair of the preservation of peace. They were forcing him into the war, he declared, after having insulted him in the Austrian Press, and sullied his honour before all Europe. He did not desire the war, of course, and considered it the greatest misfortune; nor was he inciting to it. He still hoped to preserve peace, and reckoned upon the Congress, to which, however, Prussia had not received any direct invitation.

In the event of war, he expected the absolute neutrality of the other Federal States, in particular of the South. He had no certain ally among the European Powers, excepting Italy. But he declared, at the same time, most positively, that he had gone no further with France, than general relations of friendship warranted. He added solemnly, that, as long as he was King, not a clod of German soil should ever be ceded to a foreigner.

Upon my enquiring whether I might discuss the situation with Count Bismarck, he gave his consent with pleasure, and observed that I should find him rather peaceably disposed than otherwise.

Immediately after the audience, I returned by special train to Potsdam, where I spent the evening with the Crown Prince's family. The next day, when I had the pleasure of receiving the visit of Count Bismarck, I was soon able to convince myself that matters no longer bore so pacific an

aspect as the King still appeared to suppose. Count Bismarck told me that he unfortunately regarded the prospect of war as positive. He therefore advised me no longer to delay my military preparations, and laid great stress on the importance of Coburg-Gotha, particularly in respect of Bavaria's attitude on the one side, and that of Hanover and Hesse on the other. It made a curious impression upon me, when I visited Minister von Schleinitz some time after my conversation with Count Bismarck, and heard from him that, according to his information, all pacific courses were by no means yet cut off. On the contrary, he knew that Mensdorff was resolutely combating the war-like tendencies in Vienna, and bringing his whole influence to bear at high quarters in favour of a change in the direction of peace. He said, too, that all kinds of military scruples had arisen in Vienna with regard to the arming of the Austrian infantry, and that a postponement of the contest, until at least a part of the troops were provided with breech-loaders, was being advocated there.

The same day, I saw the King again at the family dinner which took place in Potsdam. The conversation turned exclusively upon the contingencies of the war, and the King discussed his view of the course it was likely to take. He entertained no doubt that the Austrian army would proceed to Saxony as quickly as possible, and that the decisive battle would be fought near Dresden. Nothing was less thought of, than a Bohemian campaign after the pattern of 1778. On the contrary, the assumption of the King was still, that Austria at heart only desired to yield with honour.

With regard to the real feeling of the two families towards each other, at this moment of diplomatic conflicts and political discord, no one appeared better qualified to give information than the Dowager Queen Elise, whose intimate family relations to the Austrian Court had outlived all the storms of the time. I visited the Dowager Queen in Sanssouci, on the 28th of May. She conversed with me for a long time, and assured me repeatedly, that the war could, after all, only bring about a passing estrangement between Austria and Prussia. In substance, this public calamity would in no way

disturb the peaceful family ties which existed between the two illustrious houses. Afterwards, when, on my taking leave of the King, I informed him of my conversations with the Dowager Queen, he expressed his lively desire that these hopes might very soon be realised.

However, the King remarked, he would not let me part, without at all events having discussed the position which he had in view for me in the war. It had at first been his intention, he said, to confer an important command upon me. But weighty grounds had ultimately induced him to think of entrusting me with a different task at the actual outbreak of the war. He intended to attach me to the immediate staff of the Crown Prince, to whom the leadership of one of the armies would be entrusted. In saying this, the King adduced among the grounds for his decision so many things which were flattering to myself, that I scarcely feel warranted in repeating them here.

The King having mentioned that the Crown Prince was still undecided about the choice of a chief of his general staff, I had an opportunity to refer to Brigadier-General von Blumenthal, who was at that time commanding in Cologne, and with whose rare military talents I had been acquainted since the year 1849. He had been the chief of Bonin's general staff during the Schleswig-Holstein campaign, and was highly esteemed and distinguished by that General. Afterwards, I had repeatedly had Blumenthal at my side as general staff officer, on the occasion of manœuvres, and I was perhaps better able than anybody else to appreciate his great discernment and circumspection.

As I noticed that the King received my suggestion favourably, I thought it might be as well to recommend the General to the Crown Prince himself. Thus, almost by a chance, a connection was formed, which was to have the most momentous consequences in our military history.

At my parting from the King, I had an overwhelming sense of the immense seriousness of the situation before which the Prussian monarch was placed. In a few weeks, there might be decided, what had been hoped and expected for

years, and what in many respects had been neglected. The King may have had similar feelings at that moment. He took leave of me, not without a touch of emotion, and said many a kind and friendly word about my visit to Berlin, from which I could see that the idea of standing so isolated among the German sovereigns, was painful to him.

It was late in the evening when I returned to Potsdam, where I took a walk with the Crown Princess, and was perhaps able to contribute something towards reassuring her in respect of the future. For, it was easy to understand, that, just in view of the family relations to which the Crown Princess was attached, the events were not regarded by her in the rosiest light. The established fact that her Hessian relatives were marching, as it were, at the head of the anti-Prussian coalition, was scarcely very encouraging to the Crown Princess. Whatever course the war might take, there was something tragical for the Queen of England personally in the fact that her two daughters who were living in Germany, belonged to hostile camps.

The next morning, on the 29th of May, I left Potsdam. The Grand-Duke of Weimar had urgently requested me to visit him on my return, and I gladly gratified his desire that I should stay for a few hours in Weimar. His Minister von Watzdorf still clung to his standpoint, that it would not be possible to separate from the majority in the Diet. We had a consultation lasting several hours, in which I endeavoured to gain a better understanding for my views on the situation.

On arriving in Gotha, I agreed with Minister von Seebach as to the attitude we should have to observe, during the next few weeks, in the debates at the Diet, which were likely to prove decisive.

In the evening of the 31st of May, I reached Coburg, with the intention of spending the last days of peace on the Callenberg, in order to make all the necessary preparations for the campaign in quiet.

CHAPTER IX

A GENERAL DISARMAMENT PROPOSED IN GERMANY.—DECLARATIONS OF THE GERMAN STATES.—BAVARIA'S PROPOSAL TO REMOVE THE AUSTRIAN AND PRUSSIAN TROOPS FROM THE FEDERAL FORTRESSES. —AUSTRIA'S STATEMENT ON THE QUESTION OF THE DISARMAMENT. —PRUSSIA'S REPLY.—NAPOLEON'S IDEA OF A CONGRESS.—ITS PROSPECTS OF SUCCESS.—NAPOLEON'S REAL INTENTIONS.—PRUSSIA ACCEPTS THE INVITATION TO THE CONGRESS.—THE POWERS DECLINE. —THE GARRISONING OF THE GERMAN FORTRESSES.—PRUSSIA AND THE MILITARY COMMISSION IN FRANKFORT.—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE DUKE AND COUNT BISMARCK.—BISMARCK'S DRAFT OF A NEW GERMAN CONFEDERATION.—ITS EFFECT ON THE DUKE. —THE DUKE'S ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE THE GRAND DUKE OF BADEN IN FAVOUR OF PRUSSIA.—RENEWED RECRIMINATIONS BE TWEEN AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.—AUSTRIA'S PROPOSAL TO MOBILISE THE FEDERAL TROOPS.—THE DUKE POSTPONES THE DESPATCH OF HIS CONTINGENT TO THE GARRISON OF RASTATT.—SECRET AGREEMENT BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND THE MIDDLE STATES.—VOTE IN THE GERMAN DIET ON AUSTRIA'S MOTION TO MOBILISE.—PRUSSIA'S SECESSION FROM THE GERMAN CONFEDERATION.—COBURG SIDES WITH PRUSSIA.—THE LAST OF THE GERMAN DIET.

AMONG the resolutions which were arrived at by the Conference of Ministers in Bamberg, on the 13th and 14th of May, the one expressing the desirability of a universal disarmament could hardly be disapproved of, although there were just doubts as to the success of any step that might be taken in this direction in the Federal Diet. My Government, however, had not hesitated, at the seventeenth sitting of the Diet on the 19th of May, to join with Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Baden, Hesse (Grand-Duchy), Nassau, Weimar, and Meiningen, in making a last attempt to preserve peace. The vote on this motion had just been taken in Frankfort, on the 24th of May,

when I was in Berlin, as related in the foregoing chapter, for the purpose of taking up my position in the event of a war.

The result of this division belongs to the strangest experiences which the moribund Diet was still to make. The motion of the Governments, that all the Federal States should disarm, was actually accepted with unanimity. But nobody was surprised when Austria, as well as Prussia and Saxony delivered certain statements, which accorded only too exactly with the well-known contents of the despatches of their respective Cabinets regarding the question of disarming.

Austria and Saxony announced their readiness to disarm, but could only promise binding declarations at a more distant date. Prussia likewise agreed to the motion, but would only say at the next sitting, on what conditions the Government could disarm. In an elaborate statement, Prussia then adverted again and again to the priority of the armaments on the part of Austria and Saxony. Wurtemberg, too, had begun to arm first, and had therefore, as Herr von Savigny remarked, as little right to take part in the motion to disarm, as Saxony. By her proposal of the 9th of April to convoke a German Parliament, Prussia had adopted the only course that could lead to peace. It was only by the unanimous co-operation of the Governments with the nation, that permanent peace could be maintained; the speedy convocation of a parliament was therefore the best means, and could only be recommended again.

Hereupon, the Austrian Ambassador protested against the statements made by Prussia concerning the priority of Austria's armaments, whilst Saxony, demurring in like manner to the imputation of harbouring offensive intentions, also signified her assent to the decree ordering a general disarmament. I received the best illustration to this Federal resolution on the general disarmament in a letter from Herr von der Pfordten, who immediately afterwards communicated to my Government a fresh proposal to remove the Austrian and Prussian troops from the Federal fortresses: 'In consequence of the confidential discussion which took place at the Conference of Bamberg, I have conferred with the Cabinets of

Vienna and Berlin as to the best means of preventing any possible collisions between the Austrian and Prussian troops in Rastatt, Mayence, and Frankfort, and both Cabinets have agreed that Bavaria should make a motion on the subject in the Federal Assembly. With His Majesty's sanction, I have therefore instructed our Ambassador at the Diet to make the subjoined proposition.'

In this proposal, Herr von der Pfordten appealed to the result of the divisions which had taken place at the last sitting of the Diet, and which justified the hope that peace in the Confederation would be preserved. But it was nevertheless necessary, he added, to provide against any conflicts that might arise in the Federal fortresses between those who had hitherto been comrades-in-arms. Therefore, while duly reserving the garrison rights of Austria and Prussia, the troops of the two Great Powers should be withdrawn from Mayence, Rastatt, and Frankfort, and their places taken by troops from Baden, Hesse, and Nassau, and by the contingents belonging to the division of infantry reserves.

This latter regulation would have also affected the troops of Coburg-Gotha, if the events which rapidly followed, had not rendered it possible to make an alteration in these dispositions. I therefore had the good fortune to secure to my regiment an honourable share in the events of the war, whilst the troops which were compelled to obey this fatal decree of the Confederation, were in great part unable to escape the fate of disarming.

On the 1st of June, at the same sitting at which the Bavarian motion regarding the Federal fortresses was brought forward, the situation had already grown considerably more acute. Austria now made her declaration on the question of disarmament, which she had promised on the 24th of May, but coupled it with conditions which brought the war within measurable distance. She showed herself ready to rescind the mustering of her forces, which she now admitted to be directed against Prussia, as soon as security were afforded against the return of the danger of war in Germany. As this security, after the failure of the negotiations with Prussia,

depended upon the Schleswig-Holstein question being decided according to the law of the Confederation and the country itself, Austria now left this decision to the Confederation, and authorised the Governor of Holstein to convoke the States.

From the declarations made hereupon by the Prussian Ambassador, it was not difficult to see that he was somewhat surprised by this new chess-move on the part of Austria. He confined himself, however, to rejecting the repeated introduction of the Schleswig-Holstein question into the discussions of the Diet. Prussia's entire readiness to disarm, he said, had been expressed on several occasions, and the defensive character of her preparations had never been altered. Prussia would return again to the footing of peace, when the Confederation had induced the Governments of Austria and Saxony to desist from further preparations, and had afforded a guarantee against the repetition of such infringements of the Federal peace.

However, before the Austrian motion regarding the Schleswig-Holstein affair was voted upon in the Diet, the Congress scheme which the Emperor Napoleon had started at the beginning of May, had given rise to a little episode in the discussions of the Federal Diet itself. King William was from the outset determined to show his willingness to meet the Great Powers in their endeavours to preserve peace. As England and Russia had quite entered into Napoleon's idea, and were themselves advocating the inauguration of a universal Congress, Prussia certainly had least ground of all to take up an evasive attitude towards this plan. However, seeing that the Emperor Napoleon had but recently given expression in a public speech to his abhorrence of the treaties of 1815, he had to blame himself, if nobody was led to anticipate anything very favourable to the maintenance of the existing relations of the States from his Congress ideas.

Under these circumstances, it was not easy for his Minister Drouin de l'Huys to find a formula for the basis of the intended Congress. What came to the knowledge of the public on the subject, could not be regarded as authentic. But, on the one point, there was not a doubt on any side, that

the cession of Venetia to Italy on the part of Austria was to be regarded, as it were, from the beginning, as an established fact. What the Congress was able to do, was, at best, the settlement of the suitable compensations. In reference to Schleswig-Holstein, too, all kinds of plans, counsels, and ideas, had obtained currency. But Count Bismarck could await with a very easy mind, what the French Government might bring forth in this respect. Indeed, there was no fear that objections would not be raised against Napoleon's counsels, now by England, and now by Russia, now by the Oldenburgers, and now by the Danes.

Moreover, all the information I received from Paris, was, without exception, calculated to raise doubts as to the seriousness of the Congress idea. Accurate judges of French affairs attributed Napoleon's attitude chiefly to the fact, that, in contrast to Thiers' opposition at the last sittings of the legislative body, he desired to represent himself to the French as the real conductor of European affairs. It was not to be believed in France, that these exciting events were happening in Germany, without the Emperor having a hand in the matter. The opinion was willingly allowed to prevail, that the Emperor was only awaiting the suitable moment in the confusion of German affairs, to enable his Frenchmen to gain the benefits of fresh acquisitions, without having suffered the disadvantages of a war. Into this system of hollow pretences the Congress idea fitted admirably, and it was indeed a notable success, that both England and Russia seconded the Emperor.

On the 29th of May, therefore, the Prussian Cabinet was able to accept the invitation of the neutral Powers to the Conferences in Paris, without any conditions, and with the most perfect good faith. The following day, the three Notes of the neutral Powers, in which the German Confederation was also invited to take part in the discussions in Paris respecting the maintenance of peace, were submitted to the Federal Assembly in Frankfort. But, on the 6th of June, when Herr von der Pfordten, the Bavarian Minister of State, declared to the Federal Assembly his grateful readiness to accept his election as its representative, it was already

known that the inviting Powers had renounced the idea of convoking the Congress. However, as the withdrawal of the plan had not yet been officially published, no notice of the failure of the Congress was taken for the present in the Federal Assembly.

A few days later, the world was acquainted by a letter from Louis Napoleon to Drouin de l'Huys with the impression which this renewed failure of the darling congress scheme had produced in Paris. The Emperor of the French naturally did not let the opportunity escape, to represent himself again and again as the benefactor of European humanity, who was hampered by the Powers in his endeavours to promote peace. For the moment, he had put Austria in the wrong, inasmuch as he could describe her to his Frenchmen as the chief peace-breaker.

Everywhere, and particularly in Frankfort, men were persuaded of nothing so much as that the Austrian army was already half way on the march to Berlin.

Even the withdrawal of the Kalik brigade from Holstein, which Austria began to carry out in those days, was only lauded in the German newspapers as a sign of political caution, and as a proof of immense moderation and love of peace. From a military point of view, it was represented as though the invincible power of Austria would never have required to withdraw its 4000 men from the sphere of the Prussian power. When, on the 6th of June, the division was taken in the Federal Assembly on Bavaria's motion, that, to avoid the danger of any collision, Austria and Prussia should be called upon to evacuate the garrisons of Frankfort, Mayence, and Rastatt, Ambassadors and military Plenipotentiaries regularly vied with one another in seizing this opportunity of entering into the military intentions of Austria. The Prussian military Plenipotentiary, on the other hand, found it very difficult to effect one or two arrangements touching the garrison question, which were more in accordance with Prussia's views. Prussia, in particular, had every reason to insist that Bavaria, and not Hesse (Electorate), should garrison the Federal fortresses with corresponding contingents. But she found it

impossible to enforce her wishes in the Military Commission in Frankfort. Hence, at the sitting of the Diet on the 9th of June, decisions were arrived at, which would have placed me in the greatest dilemma with regard to my troops, if I had allowed myself to be intimidated.

At the instance of the Military Commission, and in spite of Prussia's protest, a Hessian brigade and the battalions from Meiningen, Schwarzenburg, and Lippe, were ordered to Mayence, whilst Altenburg, Coburg-Gotha, Anhalt, Waldeck, and Reuss, with two battalions from Baden, were appointed to garrison Rastatt. The tendency of these dispositions was unmistakable. The marching forces of those States which were determined to take the offensive against Prussia, were not to be restricted by their having to garrison the fortresses.

This real object of the decisions of the Diet with regard to the transferring of the Thuringian contingents to the fortresses, was from the first moment all the plainer to me, the more pressingly the Federal Assembly urged the expediency of rapidly carrying out this measure upon all the Governments concerned. The Saxon Ambassador had to send off one telegram after another, in order to bring about the despatch of the troops to Rastatt and Mayence within the shortest possible time. The Military Commission seemed to consider it very important that the Thuringian countries, which separated Prussia's South German and North German adversaries, should be denuded of troops as quickly as possible

Fortunately, as will be shown anon, I was saved by my direct connections with Berlin from any delusion with regard to the removal of my troops. Count Bismarck had expressed the wish to me in Berlin, that, upon my return to Coburg, I should send him some information as to the attitude of the different parties towards the new Federal schemes of the Prussian Government. This circumstance gave rise to a direct correspondence, in which Count Bismarck was able to send me the express warning not to place the Coburg-Gotha regiment out of action, as it was planned I should do in Frankfort.

But still more important than this specially military

matter, was, at this juncture, the political development of the constitution question itself, since the Prussian Government had determined to give a deeper perspective to its motion to convoke a parliament, by submitting the provincial draft of a new Federal Constitution.

In accordance with my promise, I wrote to Count Bismarck on the 6th of June, and made the following remarks on the situation:

'The moment seems arrived to issue a manifesto to the German nation. Something of the kind is expected on all sides. There being, as I presume, but little time before the outbreak of hostilities, such a declaration to the German nation would probably become necessary, if you still consider it of any importance in Berlin to win over the population of South Western Germany.

'The distrust and the suspense of the moment does most harm. With the exception of ultramontane circles, I think nobody is friendly disposed to Austria.

'The war will meet with a different reception from the public, when it knows exactly for what object it is carried on. The manifesto should be couched in quite general terms, in language of patriotic warmth. Your Excellency will be able to judge exactly, in how far I am correct in my view.

'Etc., etc.,

'ERNEST.

'CALLENBERG, *June* 6, 1866.'

On the 9th of June, the Prime Minister favoured me with the following answer, which was in more than one respect highly important:

'With my humble thanks for Your Highness' gracious letter of the 6th instant, I have the honour respectfully to submit the subjoined draft of an additional programme to the Act of Confederation as it hitherto exists.

'The proposals contained therein are not exhaustive in any respect, but are the outcome of the considerations due to the

different influences which would have to be compromised: *intra muros et extra.* If, however, we can realise them, a good piece of the task of rendering harmless the historical net of frontiers by which Germany is intersected, will after all be accomplished, and it is unfair to demand that one generation, or indeed one man, be he even my most gracious master, should make good in one day, what the bungling of generations of our ancestors has spoilt in the course of centuries. If we accomplish now, what is contained in the annexed draft, or something better, our children and grandchildren may then turn and polish the block more deftly.

'I have communicated the draft, in the first instance, to Baron Pfordten. He seems to agree with everything that is essential in it, only not with Article 1, because he thinks that Bavaria's interests demand that Austria should remain in the closer confederation also. I answered him with the question, whether, and how, he thinks that the other articles, or anything of a similar kind, are applicable to a confederation which counts Austria as a member. I do not know whether, and what, he will answer me upon it, but I always behold in him one of the most honest and unbiassed promoters of German interests. We can offer Austria the Confederation *as it exists hitherto.* But, to form a better state of things conjointly with Austria, this I consider more difficult than squaring a circle, for the task cannot be even *approximately* solved.

'I do not believe that the enclosed draft will obtain the approval of public opinion, for the fact that anyone expresses an opinion, is generally sufficient for our German countrymen passionately to espouse the opposite view. I content myself with the saying: "*qui trop embrasse, mal étreint,*" and with the other, that Rome was not built in a day, though she brought considerable odium upon herself at her first start, by the rape of the Sabines. I believe that also the Germanic Rome of the future, should God have any future at all in store for her, will not be spared the committal of some act of violence on the Sabines, and I am desirous of reducing it to a minimum, leaving the remainder to time.

'Austria has, for the present, not taken up the gauntlet in Holstein, but perhaps the sitting of the Diet which is to take place to-morrow, or the day after, and in which the institution of executory proceedings against Prussia is to be moved, will be the first note of the *glas funèbre* for the old Confederation, and we shall cry: *le Roi est mort, vive le Roi!* It is to be hoped, that so much time will then be left us, that Your Highness will not be obliged to perform the death-watch over the body of the dead King at Rastatt, but will be allowed to seek fresh laurels in union with the living King.

'If Your Highness would be graciously pleased to send me, directly or indirectly, your opinion of the alterations or completions of the reform programme, I should acknowledge it with respectful gratitude. The impending Austrian proposals in the Diet and their treatment may contribute considerably towards throwing light upon the situation and maturing the further desires of the German nation, and afford us greater clearness, freed from all German Gemüthlichkeit, with regard to the aims that should be pursued. With the firm conviction that Germany's cause and her future, in all the vicissitudes through which she may still have to pass, will find an energetic and intelligent support in Your Highness,

'I am, with deep respect, etc.

'VON BISMARCK.'

The draft of a new Federal Constitution enclosed in this letter, consisted of ten articles, the contents of which point rather to the Imperial Constitution of a later date, than to the Constitution of the North German Confederation which was realised after the war of 1866. For, according to Article 1, the Federal territory was to consist of all the States of the old Confederation, with the exception of the countries belonging to Austria and the Netherlands. In the last article, an agreement between Austria and the Parliament which it was proposed to convoke, was provided for by special treaties.

The Parliament was to be constituted by direct elections, in accordance with the statutes of the Imperial law on elections of April 12, 1849. In reference to matters of finance, duties,

and commerce, military and naval affairs, and the legislation and the management of foreign affairs, all those ideas and points of view were clearly foreshadowed, the realisation of which has only become possible after two grave wars.

It will hardly be necessary for me to say, how completely I approved of this draft of a new Confederation. The communication made to me by Count Bismarck, appeared to me like a deliverance from all the evils which we had been combating for years. I was not only able to declare my entire concurrence with the course adopted by the Prussian Government, but, what was perhaps the chief thing at that moment, I could also come forward with the glad conviction, that we should be fighting under a noble flag, full of happy promise, and raised in a just cause. I may now add, too, that the day on which I received Count Bismarck's momentous letter with its enclosure, raised me and those who shared my sentiments, on to a nationally and politically lofty stand-point, where there could be no hesitation, but merely unanimous action in accordance with our sincere convictions.

On the 7th of June, I went *via* Frankfort to Carlsruhe, to endeavour, at the last hour, to gain an influence on the Government of my brother-in-law of Baden. I left Carlsruhe with the painful certainty, that the fatal course of events had driven two comrades whose sentiments were alike, into different camps.

On my way home from Carlsruhe, I met General Ziemiecky in Coburg, who was at that time aid-de-camp to the Duke of Nassau, and just on his way to Hanover. As I knew him from the time when he was the aid-de-camp of my cousin Augustus, I took the opportunity of sending the Duke of Nassau reliable information through him concerning my view of the situation and the position I had taken up. I did not neglect to add warnings, which, as it appeared, came too late here also.

Wherever one turned, one had the sensation of meeting with total ignorance as to what was to be anticipated, and of having to contend with a weird host of self-delusions.

In this uncertainty and intolerable confusion, it appeared

like a relief, when, on the 10th and 11th of June, news arrived from Frankfort, which confirmed what had been foreshadowed in the foregoing letter from Count Bismarck concerning the accelerated course of events. On the same 9th of June, on which the resolutions had been arrived at respecting the garrisoning of the Federal fortresses, the Prussian Ambassador had made an elaborate statement with regard to Austria's proposals of the 1st of June. The joyful feeling which had taken possession of many politicians, in consequence of Austria's having submitted the whole Schleswig-Holstein affair to the Confederation, and ordered the convocation of the States of Holstein, now suffered a tremendous collapse. Prussia distinctly and resolutely repelled all Austria's attacks in reference to her violent plans in Holstein, and reproached Austria herself with having violated the Convention of Gastein. But she declared her readiness to solve the affairs of Schleswig-Holstein, as well as the question of German reform, by peaceable means.

Austria answered this declaration, at a sitting of the Diet which was summoned two days later, with a motion of a warlike description, such as had never been made in this Assembly since the Confederation existed. The official account of the sitting of the Diet of the 11th of June contained the following news, which startled the German nation out of its last illusion as to the possibility of a peaceable solution. 'Austria,' thus ran the record, 'informs the Federal Assembly of the entry of the Prussian troops into Holstein, in spite of the protest of the Imperial Governor. She characterises this proceeding as an act of self-help on the part of Prussia, which the Federal Assembly, in accordance with the regulations of Article 19 of the Final Act of Vienna, is entitled to check. She therefore moves the mobilisation of all the Federal forces not belonging to the Prussian army, subject to the further resolutions of the Federal Assembly. The division on this motion shall be taken at a sitting to be summoned shortly.'

This could only signify war.

The next day, in accordance with his letter of the 9th of

June, which I have communicated above, Count Bismarck sent the following memorable despatch to my Ministry:

'In consequence of the Austrian proposal to mobilise, we have the honour to request you urgently to postpone the despatch of your contingent, until that proposal has been decided upon.

'BISMARCK.'

When Herr von Seebach informed me of this telegram, I immediately told him that the despatch of the troops must be prevented at any price, particularly as no disadvantage could arise to the country by the delay.

After having telegraphed to Count Bismarck on the 13th of June: 'The despatch of our contingent will be postponed at Your Excellency's desire,' Herr von Seebach, on the 14th of June, addressed the following letter to the Prussian Minister-President:

'Upon the telegram addressed to me under the date of the 12th of this month, by which the wish was intimated to the Government of His Highness the Duke, that the despatch of our contingent to Rastatt should be postponed until the Austrian proposal to mobilise had been decided upon, I had the honour of informing Your Excellency that His Highness' Government is willing to accede to this request. As, contrary to all expectation, that proposal has been accepted by a majority at to-day's sitting of the Federal Diet, His Highness the Duke, my most gracious master, has at once informed His Royal Highness the Grand-Duke of Baden, that, in view of the situation and complication necessarily arising from that resolution, he will for the present not let his contingent go to Rastatt. The question, however, whether the contingent will still have to be despatched in accordance with that decree, must now be speedily settled. Before taking any further step in this matter, His Highness' Government considers it imperative to learn the views of His Majesty's Government on the subject. I therefore venture to address the humble

request to Your Excellency, that you will be good enough to inform me of those views with all convenient speed.

'I beg Your Excellency to accept, etc.,

'SEEBACH.

'COBURG, *June* 14, 1866.'

The fatal 14th of June, which had commenced in Frankfort with affairs of peace, was to end with the tumult of war. It was not until two days after the sitting, that the actual terms of Austria's motion to mobilise the whole Federal army, with the exception of the Prussian corps, were made known to the different Governments. I still have a distinct recollection of the impression which that document produced upon me. Its firm tone, coupled with the determination to have the question settled at a 'sitting to be convened as soon as possible,' left scarcely room for any doubt, that a far-reaching agreement between Austria and the Middle States must have gone before. I have never been able to ascertain any particulars of this agreement, all parties having found it advisable to wrap the negotiations which preceded the resolution of the 14th of June, in profound darkness. But, as the Federal army corps, according to the Austrian proposal, were to be got in readiness to march within the short space of a fortnight, the general opinion that Austria meant at once to assume the offensive, was confirmed. The only strange feature about these proposals was the fact that the question of the chief command was left to be settled at a later date.

As the division on Austria's motion in the Diet was taken in consequence of a special resolution, the votes were delivered at once, without any previous discussion in committee.

Austria voted for the motion, and at the same time informed the Diet, that the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Federal army corps were already mobilised. Prussia, on the other hand, declared against the motion being dealt with at all, even against its being referred to a committee, and entered a protest against it. Hereupon, Bavaria and Saxony voted for the motion, both giving the same reasons, whilst Hanover made a tortuous

statement, which, however, likewise contained an acceptance of the motion.

Wurtemberg simply assented. Baden demanded the appointment of a committee, which was to make proposals for adjusting the differences. But, as this mode of proceeding was not adopted, she abstained from voting altogether. The Electorate of Hesse and the Grand-Duchy were for the motion, Luxemburg and Brunswick against it. But as the latter voted in the Curia with Nassau, this vote was taken as affirmative. Mecklenburg opposed the motion, and in the votes of the 15th, 16th, and 17th Curias, complete harmony prevailed among the different Federal members.

After the result of the division had been declared, the Prussian Ambassador made the memorable statement containing Prussia's secession from the Confederation. After the Ambassador had actually withdrawn, the Federal Assembly may have been in its right in contesting the dissolubility of the German Confederation by reason of Article 1 of the Act of Confederation. As a matter of fact, however, what was now left behind in Frankfort, was a mere torso, and only eked out a brief existence. According to the accounts of Herr von Beaulieu, the excitement among the Ambassadors, in consequence of Prussia's declaration, was so considerable, that, in spite of all the threats which had gone before, at least the form of the event appeared to have caused surprise.

The Middle States, in particular, felt themselves hard hit by the reproach of a previous secret agreement raised against them by the Prussian Ambassador, and they gave vent to their anger by adding an express rider to their protest against Prussia's secession, in which they declared, that what had been said about the voting was altogether incorrect.

In spite of the excitement which the news of the event produced all over Germany, the prevailing feeling was, notwithstanding, one of relief and deliverance. The suspense of the situation was at last bound to cease, and the uncertainty disappeared. A new era had set in.

On the 15th of June, I received the following telegram from the King, which left no doubt as to the war-like

operations that were soon to be expected: 'The German Confederation having collapsed, in consequence of yesterday's resolution of the Federal Diet, I reckon with certainty that Your Highness' contingent will be put on a footing of war, and placed at my exclusive disposal.'

I answered at once, that, in my letter to the Royal Ministry of State of the previous day, the King's expectation had already been complied with, and that I was awaiting further particulars respecting the military arrangements.

I at the same time despatched the mobilised Coburg battalion to Gotha, and thus likewise anticipated a request addressed by Count Bismarck to the Ministry of State in Gotha. For, on the 16th of June, the Prussian Government sent a kind of ultimatum to Herr von Seebach, which was certainly calculated to silence the anti-Prussian talk and agitation, of which there was still no lack, even in Gotha. The telegram ran as follows:

'The Confederation having been dissolved, and the convention between Prussia and Coburg-Gotha still continuing in force, the Government of His Majesty the King of Prussia requests the Government of His Highness the Duke of Saxe-Coburg at once to mobilise its contingent and place it at the disposal of the General in command in Erfurt. His Majesty's Government thinks it may reckon upon the fulfilment of this request all the more safely, as, in the event of its being refused, Prussia would, to her lively regret, have to consider the Government of His Highness the Duke on the side of her enemies, and would be compelled to act accordingly.

'BISMARCK.'

At the next sittings of the Diet, one Job's post followed upon the other. The ultimatums sent by Prussia to Hanover and Hesse-Cassel, and the announcement of the hostile invasion of the Electorate by the Prussians. The Federal Assembly was also rendered uneasy by the non-arrival in Rastatt and

Mayence of the contingents from Anhalt, Lippe, the two Schwarzenburgs, Coburg-Gotha, Altenburg, and Waldeck, so that the Saxon Ambassador thought himself called upon to offer a few well-meant surmises to the effect that the delay in the transport of the troops was probably only caused by the interruption of the communications.

A number of Governments now formally declared their secession from the Confederation, and their abstention from further participation in the proceedings of the Diet. After many tedious differences, Bavaria and Austria were at last able to agree on the question of the Chief Command, and on the 27th of June both Governments moved the following resolutions:

a. That the Chief Command of all the Federal troops be conferred on H.R.H. Prince Charles of Bavaria.

b. That His Royal Highness be authorised to make such alterations in the division of the troops, as circumstances may require.

c. That the Saxon army be attached to the Austrian army.

d. That the chief management of the operations of the Austrian and the Federal army shall proceed from the Commander of the Imperial Royal army, Master of the Ordnance Baron von Benedek.

This motion was of course assented to, as, among the four Federal Ambassadors who still had to be taken into account, all matters could be adjusted in the pleasantest manner, before the discussions took place.

Whilst the Confederation, in its last stage, still showed its old incapacity to arrive at even half-way satisfactory decisions with regard to a matter like the management of the war, a communication was made to the Diet by the Ambassador of the Electorate of Hesse, which created an unusual sensation. He was instructed to bring the exorbitant fact to the knowledge of the High Federal Assembly, that His Royal Highness the Elector had been carried off to Stettin as a prisoner of war, and that the Prussian commander of the troops had arrogated to himself the governing power in the Electorate. A copy of the proclamation which the Elector had issued

previous to his abduction, was then officially handed to each of the Ambassadors as a recollection of this event.

In those great and momentous days, the Governments allied against Prussia had, to all appearances, still no adequate idea of the desperate military and political position in which they were all placed. Among these allies, who had only just chosen their commander-in-chief, there was barely any official knowledge, where the different contingents of the States were situated, and which troops were in readiness for war. The confusion which had broken out amongst the members of the Diet, and which had no doubt been foreseen by the Prussian Government, surpassed the worst conceptions. Notwithstanding, the Plenipotentiaries of the Governments of Saxony, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Baden, who were now almost restricted to themselves, or at any rate formed the majority by virtue of the numerous substitutions, continued unremittingly to hold their sittings.

It was pleasant to hear that Liechtenstein had placed its contingent at the disposal of the Diet to defend the Tyrol as German Federal territory. The official accounts of the last sittings of the Diet in July merely contained the general statement: 'As for the rest, several resolutions were arrived at concerning the present affairs of war.'

During these military discussions, the Federal Ambassadors, in the beginning of July, hit upon the unfortunate idea of fortifying Frankfort. But, as the Senate of the town refused to comply with this demand of the Diet, the defensive measures were continued with the monies of the Confederation. However, the faith in the fortifications outside the open town cannot have been very great, for it was found advisable, on the 10th of July, to remove the Federal treasure and the deposits placed with Rothschild. On the following day, the Federal Assembly determined to transfer its seat provisionally to Augsburg, and informed the Senate of the town of Frankfort of this intention in a Note, in which the hope for 'the ultimate success of the good cause' was as little resigned, as the confidence 'that, in the walls of this town, which is so rich in reminiscences of German greatness, the representatives of the

sovereigns and nations will meet again, in order permanently to found Germany's power and liberty.'

On the 24th of August, the last sitting of the rump Diet was held in Augsburg, and thus this institution, which had just reached its fiftieth year, was buried, without sound of drum or funeral note.

CHAPTER X

PRUSSIA DECLARES WAR AGAINST SAXONY, HANOVER, AND HESSE.—THE HANOVERIAN ARMY.—ITS FIRST MOVEMENTS.—PRECARIOUS POSITION OF THE DUKE'S TROOPS.—REINFORCEMENTS.—NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ENEMY.—THE DUKE ACCUSED OF DECEIVING THE KING OF HANOVER.—CURIOUS BEHAVIOUR OF THE HANOVERIANS.—TRUCE.—MISUNDERSTANDINGS.—LETTER FROM THE KING OF HANOVER TO THE DUKE.—GENERAL VON ALVENSLEBEN ARRIVES FROM BERLIN TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE KING.—HIS OPINION OF THE MILITARY POSITION.—THE KING OF HANOVER'S RELIANCE ON ASSISTANCE FROM THE BAVARIANS.—THE POSITION OF THE BAVARIAN ARMY.—GENERAL VON ALVENSLEBEN'S CONDITIONS FOR THE CAPITULATION OF THE HANOVERIAN TROOPS.—MILITARY DISPOSITIONS.—PRUSSIA'S ULTIMATUM TO THE KING OF HANOVER.—INFATUATION OF KING GEORGE.—HE DECLINES PRUSSIA'S CONDITIONS.—EISENACH IN DANGER.—THE DUKE'S JOURNEY ON A RAILWAY-ENGINE.—THE 27TH OF JUNE AND THE BATTLE OF LANGENSALZA.—THE DUKE'S ACCOUNT.—AFTER THE BATTLE.—POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES.—CAPITULATION OF THE HANOVERIAN ARMY.—CONDUCT OF THE DUKE OF MEININGEN.—TELEGRAM FROM QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE DUKE OF COBURG.—THE DUKE GOES TO BERLIN.

On the 14th of June, the day which determined the war, I was in Coburg, as related before. Minister von Seebach had come in the afternoon for a Conference, during which the fatal despatches from Frankfort arrived. We did not deceive ourselves for an instant as to the import of those decisions. The excitement in my little residence waxed the greater, the firmer the conviction grew, that we here were quite unprotected against the neighbouring Bavarians, and that a hostile occupation of the town would be merely a question of time.

The Austrian Ambassador at the Court of Berlin had al-

ready been recalled, in consequence of the entry of the Prussian troops into Holstein. The declarations of war might follow at any moment, and hostilities possibly begin at once. On the 15th of June, the Prussian Ambassadors in Dresden, Hanover, and Cassel, delivered identical Notes, in which the two Kings and the Elector were offered the neutrality of their countries, with the guarantee of the sovereign rights of the rulers, subject, however, to the restrictions contained in the reform draft of the 10th of June. Time to answer was given until the evening of the same day. The Saxon Government at once firmly rejected the proposal, and, as by midnight no satisfactory answers had been received from the other parties either, the Ambassadors accredited at the three Courts formally declared war against Saxony, Hanover, and the Electorate of Hesse.*

Under these circumstances, it was to be foreseen that the bloody drama would, at least in its first act, play in the immediate proximity of my two countries. Prussia's North German and South German adversaries were dependent on concentrating their forces as quickly as possible, and, whether the Hanoverians and Hessians, or the Bavarians and Wurtembergers, were the quickest in accomplishing the strategic advance march for the purpose of uniting their Federal contingents, in any case the Thuringian countries lay in the course they would take.

My assumption, like that of everybody else, in the first days of the war, was naturally, that the States allied with Austria had planned an offensive attack, which could only be directed concentrically against Berlin. That, in spite of innumerable military missions and conferences, no intelligible arrangements with regard to joint operations had been arrived at between Austria and the allied German Governments, this nobody believed.

On the 18th of June, the King of Prussia thanked me by letter for my speedy reply to his telegram of the 15th, and informed me at the same time, that Oldenburg had also an-

* It is advisable at this point, and at all following passages referring to the war, to have the work of the General Staff at hand.

nounced her secession from the Confederation. As to myself, I was to repair to head-quarters, in order, if need be, to assume a temporary post of command. In expressing my humble thanks to the King, I drew his attention to the fact, that my little country Coburg was encompassed by Bavaria and Meiningen; that the attitude of the latter, in respect of the war, was not cleared up, and that, according to reliable news, the Bavarians were marching up the valley of the Main.

As to my regiment, it was decided that it was to march off to join the Main army, which was being formed under the command of General Vogel von Falckenstein. On the 18th, I also ordered the Coburg battalion to proceed to Gotha. When the troops started, I gave instructions to make the Werra railway from Lichtenfels impracticable, and took the locomotives and the existing rolling stock in great part with me to Gotha.

In the early morning of the 20th of June, Colonel von Fabeck informed me that, in obedience to an order just received from Berlin, he had to send a detachment to Marksuhl in order to make the Werra railway impracticable there too. Since it had become known that King George had concentrated all his active forces near Göttingen, the assumption that the Hanoverians intended to unite with the Bavarians in the valley of the Werra, grew more and more likely. In Berlin, therefore, the greatest importance was attached to the securing of Eisenach. I had my whole contingent transported to that place, whilst simultaneously a detachment from the garrison of Erfurt started off, to oppose the approach of the Hanoverians in conjunction with my troops.

Fortunately, the Hanoverian army remained for a disproportionate length of time in its quarters near Göttingen, and thus lost two or three days. But it had found time by the 20th of June to considerably increase its strength, and was far better equipped at the beginning of the war, than had been expected. Even the following days, until the battle of Langensalza, several officers of high rank expressed themselves confident that the Hanoverians were neither equipped for war, nor in fighting trim. They underrated these brave troops, and consoled themselves with the false assumption

that they were suffering from a total want of munition, which afterwards, however, only proved correct in a limited degree.

By the 22nd of June, the vanguard of the Hanoverians had entered Mühlhausen. At my desire, Colonel von Fabeck had started from Eisenach the same morning in the direction of Mihla. He hoped to find means of joining General von Glümer, and to advance with him towards the high-road from Mühlhausen to Langensalza. The communication with Glümer, however, was not effected, nor could anything be ascertained regarding his advance. In the afternoon, Captain von Wydenbruck reported himself to me. He had been reconnoitring with half a squadron of militia dragoons from Erfurt in the neighbourhood of Langensalza, had watched the movements of the Hanoverians towards Langensalza, and gained the conviction that the enemy would advance along the road from Langensalza to Gotha. I went at once with the Captain on to the road leading to Langensalza, ordered out-posts to be stationed near Warza and the farms situated close by, and gave instructions to have night patrols. The vanguard of the Hanoverians had by this time advanced as far as Grossgottern, and their reconnoitring patrols ventured as far as Langensalza. The King himself was quartered at Mühlhausen.

The Prussian division Beyer was then stationed at a distance of two or three marches, and was consequently as little able as the main force under General von Falckenstein to catch up the departing enemy, if the latter quietly continued his march through the Thuringian forest the next day. Towards evening, therefore, I sent Lieutenant-Colonel von Reuter to Eisenach, to explain the true state of things there, and, if necessary, to withdraw Fabeck's detachment to Gotha. In Eisenach, Lieutenant-Colonel von Reuter found Fabeck's detachment returned from its advance march, and greatly fatigued. Nothing had been ascertained, either of the enemy, or of General Glümer. One militia battalion had been left in Kreuzburg, another had advanced as an outpost towards Mihla. The telegraph in Langensalza was still in activity.

As matters now stood, the choice of the enemy's course between Eisenach or Gotha appeared not yet so determined, as to call for an immediate transfer of the detachment from Eisenach to Gotha. In the night, however, I received the news, that the enemy, while shutting off Langensalza, had sent pickets in advance towards Warza. Strong columns, it was said, had turned off before the town towards Döllstedt. It was plain, therefore, that the Hanoverians intended to break through between Gotha and Erfurt. In consequence, I had an engine heated, and went personally to Eisenach, to instruct Colonel Fabeck. It seemed to me to be desirable to forestall the enemy by means of the railway. After Lieutenant von Gossler of the Coburg battalion had been sent by express *via* Kreuzburg to find General Glümer, and summon him to follow us in the direction of Eisenach, or Gotha, as the case might be, I ordered alarm to be sounded at day-break on the 23rd of June. The trains were meanwhile kept in readiness, and everything so arranged, that Colonel von Fabeck could arrive in Gotha with his troops by eight o'clock in the morning. Everything depended upon our forestalling the Hanoverians, and deceiving them as to the strength of the forces at our disposal. As they were sure to assume that the detachment Fabeck still occupied its position near Eisenach in the morning of the 23rd, we intended to make them believe that they had met with fresh troops near Gotha.

The detachment took up its quarters under cover of an outpost station. But, in the afternoon, it was reported that the enemy's columns were advancing *via* Tüngeda and Wangenheim, at a distance of 1¼ miles from the town of Gotha. In consequence of this, I ordered alarm to be sounded, and the detachment took up its position near Remstedt. The Coburg battalion of Fusileers was ordered to advance in company columns towards the Grenzberg.

Our situation was almost desperate. In the course of the day, however, a very pleasant announcement was made to me by a despatch from General von Moltke. The Commander-

in-chief sent me two troops of horse artillery from Dresden, which were to arrive by special train in the evening.

I awaited them at the station, and my surprise may be imagined, when I found an old acquaintance, Major von Petzel, at the head of the troops. I knew this excellent man from the Schleswig-Holstein campaigns of 1848 to 1849. The Major had now come as a friend in need, and his arrival revived in no small measure the courage of the little handful of troops, which, at the beginning of the war, had beheld themselves placed before an almost unachievable task.

Major Petzel had instructions to await my orders in Gotha. I immediately ordered the men to leave the waggons, and the two troops to advance at full gallop along the road from Warza. At a very exposed spot in the vicinity of Goldbach, the troops were drawn up, in order to prevent the enemy from breaking through, in the event of an advance, which we apprehended would take place that evening. Nearly at the same time, the fourth regiment of Foot Guards arrived by rail from Berlin. But it had unfortunately been obliged to leave one battalion in Weimar, at the desire of the Prussian Ambassador von Pirch. I let the two other battalions, under Colonel Baron Osten-Lacken, at once pass on to Eisenach, in order, at least in some measure, to secure that place, which had been left totally ungarrisoned since the morning.

From the Grenzberg, however, nothing was to be seen of the advance of the enemy's columns. Only our cavalry pickets had from time to time come to close quarters with the light cavalry of the enemy, on which occasions some ugly wounds were received.

But, before darkness forced us to abandon the position we had taken up, a parlamentaire appeared before Colonel von Fabeck, in the person of Major von Jacobi of the Hanoverian General Staff, with a legitimation from General von Arentsschild. This mission had been brought about by a diplomatic action on the part of General von Moltke, which had been commenced on the previous day, but had at first not been attended with success. On the 22nd of June, at nine o'clock

in the morning, the following telegram, addressed to Colonel Fabeck, had arrived from General von Moltke in Berlin:

'You are to treat immediately through a parlamentaire with the General in command at Heiligenstadt, summoning him to lay down his arms, because he is surrounded on all sides. At the same time, make enquiry whether King of Hanover present with the troops. Protract these negotiations as long as possible, and communicate at once with Generals von Beyer and Glümer, in order to bring troops to Eisenach in time.—VON MOLTKE.'

In consequence of this telegram, Captain von Ziehlberg, of my regiment, was at once despatched to Hanoverian head-quarters. When, long after the war was at an end, the tendency arose in Hanoverian circles, to make me responsible for the misfortunes which King George had entirely brought upon himself, the circumstance that this officer had worn the Coburg uniform, played a very strange part. People clung to this external evidence, in order to make believe that I had been personally designing to deceive the King of Hanover They acted as if nothing had been known at Hanoverian head-quarters, either of the military convention between Prussia and Gotha, or of my having placed my troops under Prussia's command. Because a Coburg officer had appeared at Hanoverian head-quarters with this message from General von Moltke, it must needs be I who had deluded them into these negotiations, and played a false game with the King of Hanover.

Major von Jacobi told Colonel von Fabeck on his arrival, that Captain von Ziehlberg had certainly called upon them to lay down their arms, but that he had been detained, because his legitimation was considered insufficient. The King of Hanover, however, was not disinclined, he said, to enter into negotiations.

After Colonel von Fabeck had informed me of Major von Jacobi's intentions, I recommended him to support the desired negotiations with General von Moltke, and, for this purpose,

to effect a direct telegraphic intercourse between Berlin and the Hanoverian envoy. Consequently, Major von Jacobi, with my consent, it is true, but without my having had any previous conversation with him, proceeded in company with Colonel von Fabeck to the telegraph office in Gotha, for the purpose of treating there, during the following night, with General von Moltke. But, as the Hanoverian parlamentaire was not in the position to give any kind of assurance respecting a truce of arms, it appeared to me to be necessary to adopt precautionary measures for the night. I therefore gave instructions to barricade the entrances to the town. In the meantime, however, after various interruptions and delays, the telegraphic negotiations between Jacobi and General von Moltke ultimately had to be broken off on the part of Prussia, and towards morning the Hanoverian envoy returned again to head-quarters.

In the morning of the 24th of June, therefore, the situation seemed to me to be completely unaltered. I had no doubt that in the course of the day an attack would be made by the Hanoverians. Under these circumstances, I was not a little surprised, when, on the 24th of June, instead of the expected advance of the enemy, I received news of the return of Major von Jacobi to the outposts. This time, he arrived in company with two other Hanoverian officers, and, when Colonel von Fabeck hastened to the spot to receive them, he found, besides Jacobi, Captain von Krause and Colonel Dammers, who introduced himself as the Aid-de-camp-General of the King, and declared that he had come on a special mission from him. Fabeck entered the carriage with these three officers, and drove first to the telegraph office. According to Colonel von Fabeck's statement, which was afterwards taken down, he alighted with Krause, to enquire whether any further reply to the telegrams forwarded to Berlin the day before, had arrived. Upon receiving a negative reply from the telegraph officials, Colonel Dammers desired to speak with me personally, as he had been informed by Fabeck, that, besides myself, no Prussian General was then present in the town of Gotha. Colonel Dammers afterwards denied ever having come to

Gotha with a message to me. As a matter of fact, however, a carriage containing Dammers and Major von Jacobi, accompanied by our aid-de-camp von Falckenstein, and an orderly on the box, drove up to my palace towards ten o'clock in the morning. Colonel von Fabeck had already taken his leave. Colonel Dammers had left Captain Krause behind, with instructions to return alone, after a certain space of time, to Hanoverian head-quarters. What intentions were at the bottom of this, we on our side were never able to ascertain.

I invited the Hanoverian gentlemen to acquaint me with their errand, and I think I can still remember having in a few words expressed my pleasure and satisfaction at the King of Hanover's apparent desire to make use of my mediation. I represented to them, that their army was placed in a desperate position; in fact, that it would be impossible for them to escape, and that it would be better, therefore, if the King were still at the last hour to enter into negotiations with Prussia on a political basis. I expressed my conviction, that the King would be lost, if he hesitated for an instant to effect an understanding with Prussia in accordance with the conditions of an alliance, as previously indicated by Count Bismarck.

Colonel Dammers hereupon declared, that he possessed absolutely no authority to enter into political negotiations. He said that the Hanoverian army was well equipped for war, and doubted that we were in a position to oppose it with an adequate force. I asked him to consider that we were in possession of the railways and the telegraphs, whereas the Hanoverians were isolated and entirely cut off from all assistance. Upon this, Colonel Dammers remarked that, as to the alleged possession and use of the railway, my reasoning was no longer in point, as the Hanoverians had destroyed the railway bridge near Mechterstädt, and had cut the telegraph.

It will be conceivable that this news was calculated to produce a deep impression upon us, although we may not have shown it. I asked Herr von Seebach and Colonel von Fabeck, whether they knew anything of the interruption of the telegraph, and the former went out to make enquiries.

He returned soon afterwards with the re-assuring announcement that the communication between Gotha and Eisenach was up to that moment in no way interrupted.

Somewhat disconcerted by the non-success of his threatening language, Colonel Dammers now endeavoured to influence us by a more business-like statement of the Hanoverian active forces. After having pledged his word of honour that the strength of the corps amounted to 18,000 men, with 52 cannons, he drew himself up, and said, with a breath of relief: 'Such a brave army will assuredly fight its way through.' I answered without hesitation, that this might be possible, perhaps, indeed, likely, but that the remainder of the King of Hanover's army would then have dwindled down to a very small number.

I declared my readiness, however, to mediate with the King of Prussia in the King of Hanover's favour. To render this possible, it was necessary to establish some basis for the conditions upon which the Hanoverians would be willing to lay down their arms. In order to prevent any misconceptions, I insisted that the Hanoverian officers should telegraph their conditions expressly to General von Moltke. In consequence, the following telegram was sent to the latter by Colonel Dammers. 'At the desire of His Highness the Duke of Coburg-Gotha, the Aid-de-camp-General of the King of Hanover, who has arrived to conclude the negotiations, states, in pursuance of this morning's telegrams, that the Hanoverian troops will bind themselves for one year not to take part in the hostilities, provided that free passage be allowed them to certain points in the south, as shall be determined hereafter.'

I supported this proposal in the following telegram to the King of Prussia:

'King of Hanover has claimed my mediation through Aid-de-camp-General Dammers. I thought I ought not to refuse it. I urgently recommend the acceptance of the conditions. The position of our operating troops is precarious. General Beyer is too far in the rear, General Glümer not found. The Hanoverian army, according to Colonel Dammers'

word of honour, 18,000 men with 52 guns, is in no way demoralised, and stands closely concentrated before us. We shall therefore not be able to prevent the troops from breaking through on the Gotha-Eisenach route, particularly as we have no cavalry to dispose of. The attack will take place to-day, unless the capitulation is effected. Colonel Dammers, therefore, awaits answer within the shortest possible time.

'DUKE OF COBURG.'

Before Colonel Dammers left the palace, a telegram arrived from the King in Berlin, which, in answer to my previous communications, announced quite in a general way that one of the King's adjutants was that day to proceed to the King of Hanover to receive his Majesty's commands. I at once showed this telegram to Colonel Dammers, not without satisfaction at the success of my mediation, and requested him to inform his King of the favourable state of the negotiations. He, on his part, proposed a truce of arms, on the subject of which the following minute was taken down in the presence of Minister von Seebach and Colonel von Fabeck.

'§ 1 Colonel Dammers promises: We shall not attack, before the Aid-de-camp-General of His Majesty the King of Prussia has reached His Majesty the King of Hanover, provided that his arrival be not delayed until to-morrow.

'§ 2 His Highness the Duke promises: The postponement of the attack consequent on the foregoing promise, shall not be made use of to bring up my troops on the railway.'

When Colonel Dammers took leave of me, it was agreed that Major von Jacobi should stay behind in Gotha, in order to await and accompany the Aid-de-camp-General of the King of Prussia to Hanoverian head-quarters.

But hardly had Colonel Dammers started for Langensalza, and long before he could have reached the King, the previous despatch of the King of Prussia was followed up by a confirmatory reply from Count Bismarck, which was perfectly

satisfactory, and extremely favourable to the Hanoverian cause. It was couched in the following terms:

'*To His Royal Highness the Duke of Coburg-Gotha.*

'His Majesty the King consents to the proposal specified by the Hanoverian Aid-de-camp-General, in accordance with the statement of Major von Jacobi, and contained in Your Highness' telegram of eleven o'clock, on condition that the Hanoverians give definite guarantees for their non-participation in the hostilities during the period of a year. General von Alvensleben has started by special train, in order to negotiate the matter. By His Majesty's command.—BISMARCK.'

To my no small surprise, however, another Hanoverian parlamentaire now arrived in Gotha, and announced himself to me as Captain von der Wense of the Hanoverian Regiment of Hussar-Guards. When asked about his errand, he was unable to produce any positive legitimation, and only declared that he had been commissioned by the King of Hanover to inform Colonel Dammers in Gotha, that the negotiations were to be broken off once for all, and that the negotiators, both Colonel Dammers and Major von Jacobi, were to return immediately.

I was not a little astonished at this announcement, which, considering the strange circumstances under which it was made, was positively startling. Minister von Seebach, too, who was present at the audience, was quite unable to explain this strange incident.

'Is it possible,' I said to the Captain, not exactly in the most conciliatory manner, 'that you should not have met Colonel Dammers, who left the town only an hour ago, on your way from Langensalza? Did he not inform you that he had just completed his negotiations here, and concluded a truce of arms, which, I trust, has already taken effect?'

Captain von der Wense seemed very loath to answer these questions. However, he finally declared that he had met Colonel Dammers on the road from Gotha, but had received

instructions from him to ride on and execute the commission which he had been entrusted with.

At this moment, I received a report from Colonel von Osten in Eisenach, that the Hanoverians had approached Eisenach and were threatening to bombard the town, unless they were allowed free passage to the South. A collision had also taken place near Mechterstädt between Hanoverian outposts and portions of the 4th regiment of Prussian Guards. When I asked Captain von der Wense how he found these facts compatible with the behaviour of Colonel Dammers, he declared himself ready, for his part, to do anything that could contribute towards a renewal of the negotiations.

It was then agreed, that Major von Jacobi, who had been summoned at Captain von der Wense's desire, should draw up a telegram informing the Hanoverian troops of the truce that had been concluded, and that Captain von der Wense should return to head-quarters with Count Bismarck's official despatch, and inform the King of Hanover of the pending arrival of General von Alvensleben. Major von Jacobi sent a telegram to Eisenach in the following terms: 'Avoid hostilities, the conditions negotiated by Hanover having been accepted by Prussia.'

This telegram, which went to Frottstedt, and came into the hands of the Hanoverian Lieutenant-Colonel von Knipping, was afterwards transmitted to Colonel von Bülow, and fortunately caused the suspension of hostilities in Eisenach.

However, I was taken completely by surprise, when the King of Hanover rather brusquely rejected the despatch from Prince Bismarck, which was delivered to him by Captain von der Wense, and of which I had assumed that it would bring the negotiations with Prussia to a definite conclusion. Captain von der Wense had ridden away from Gotha soon after two o'clock, and arrived again in Gotha at six o'clock, with the following letter from the King, counter-signed by Count Platen:

'Your Highness has just sent me by my Captain von der Wense a telegram from the President of the Prussian

Ministry, Count von Bismarck, saying that His Majesty the King of Prussia assents to the proposal with reference to the passage of my army through the Thuringian Federal States, but that he makes the condition that guarantees should be given for the non-participation of my army in the hostilities during the period of a year. Your Highness will conceive that I am unable to agree to such a condition, and that I cannot make a postponement of military operations dependent upon negotiations on that basis. These operations have already suffered considerable drawback from the fact that Your Highness yesterday morning sent me a parlamentaire without sufficient legitimation in the person of your Captain von Ziehlberg. I cannot allow any fresh delay to take place in the plan of operation, and must therefore request Your Highness to send my Major von Jacobi back to me at once.

'However, in order to do what I can to spare the inhabitants and prevent bloodshed, I am quite willing to permit negotiations to be opened with Aid-de-camp-General von Alvensleben, who has been sent to me by His Majesty the King of Prussia.

'With the most perfect esteem, etc.,

'GEORGE REX.

'LANGENSALZA, *June* 24, 1866.'

Much as I regretted the contents of this letter, it was plain to me that my part as mediator had now been played out. After dinner, I drove to the station to receive General von Alvensleben, whose arrival at half-past six had in the meantime been signalled to me from Berlin. My communications naturally excited the utmost surprise of the Royal Aid-de-camp-General, who immediately sent an account of the state of things to Berlin. I proposed to the General that we should hold a conference with Minister von Seebach and Colonel von Fabeck, which occupied us until late in the evening. Again and again we discussed and considered the strange contradiction in the letter from the King of Hanover, who, on the one hand, rejected Count Bismarck's conditions with evident aversion, and yet, on the other hand, wished to

speak with General von Alvensleben. The latter, however, now positively declared that he could not swerve by a hair's breadth from the conditions indicated by Count Bismarck, and that he therefore considered it utterly useless to continue his journey to the King of Hanover. Finally, we all agreed that it must be left to the King of Hanover to send an envoy to General von Alvensleben in Gotha, in case he desired to continue the negotiations.

After having arrived at this decision, we sent for Captain von der Wense, informed him of our view of the Royal letter, and sent him back to Hanoverian head-quarters to obtain further instructions.

The military position had thus again become altered, and, as the truce agreed upon with General von Bülow was only to last until the next day at seven o'clock, I considered it advisable to despatch Lieutenant von Hochwächter of the 7th regiment of artillery to Lieutenant-General von Beyer, in order to acquaint him with the dangerous position of Eisenach. Lieutenant Hochwächter found the General at mid-night encamped before Kreuzburg, whence he at once moved with his brigade to Eisenach. The Göben division also reached Eisenach the next morning.

The position of the Hanoverians during the night from the 24th to the 25th, covered a very large area, and extended from Eisenach, where General von Bülow's vanguard was encamped, to Langensalza, where the rear-guard under Colonel von der Decken was stationed. The head-quarters were in Grossbehringen, where the King was present. The brigades de Vaux, Bothmer, and Knesebeck, were distributed along the route from Mechterstädt to Gräfentonna. The telegraphic communication between Gotha and Eisenach passed over Berlin, as it had not yet been possible to repair the railway and telegraph lines, which had been demolished at noon.

When Captain von der Wense started for the Hanoverian head-quarters, General von Alvensleben fixed a term of six hours, *i.e.*, until June 25, at 2 A.M., for the King of Hanover to make up his mind. Unless he declared his intentions by that time, hostilities would be recommenced. However, the

time elapsed, and no news came. The garrison of Gotha was therefore alarmed, and, at a quarter to four o'clock, I rode out to our outposts with General von Alvensleben. The General inspected the position of Gotha, and expressed his surprise that the Hanoverians had not forced their way through long ago. He remarked, in a tone of great anxiety, 'Your Highness cannot hold your ground. They are certain to break through.' I therefore recommended him to prevail upon the King to have further reinforcements sent on from Magdeburg to Gotha, which in the course of the following day actually became the means of our rescue.

It was very difficult, both then and later, to find an explanation for the proceedings at Hanoverian head-quarters, and the indecision in the plans of the Hanoverians was a subject of endless conjectures and surmises on the part of the officers of our General Staff. Nor were our commanding generals themselves able to agree as to how the ever changing marches of the Hanoverians, their advances towards the south, and their aimless swervings, now to the east, and now to the west, were to be construed.

The opinion was mainly, that all the tendencies of King George were aimed at uniting his forces as speedily as possible with those of Bavaria, and there was no doubt that he had despatched several diplomatic and military missions to the Bavarians, since his arrival in Langensalza. In the reports of these proceedings, which were afterwards published by the Hanoverians, no secret was made of the expedition of Archivrath Onno Klopp to Bavaria, which was undertaken with the view of accelerating the arrival of Prince Charles and his forces. This indefatigable man subsequently related himself, that he had driven through Gotha on the 23rd of June, during Major von Jacobi's first presence as parlamentaire in Gotha, and that he had had the King's instructions to inform the Bavarians that his master would rather suffer anything than capitulate. This incident of the journey of Herr Klopp reminds me of a scene which took place during those days of wild excitement, and which, if it has no connection with the adventure I have just related, would afford a

proof that there were other envoys, besides Herr Klopp, who went to the Bavarians. One day, I cannot give the precise date, I saw a carriage with a coachman in the Royal Hanoverian livery pass my palace in full gallop. I opened the window to call the guard, but it was unfortunately too late. The carriage was gone, before the soldiers could get ready to fire. I had no doubt that we had missed an important capture, for, if Onno Klopp was really concealed in that Royal carriage, the Bavarians would have been left without news, and their very inconvenient appearance in the next few days would not have prevented General Göben from taking a decisive part in the battle of Langensalza on the 27th of June.

At all events, such expeditions and missions of the Hanoverian agents proved how blissfully confident the feeling must have been at the King's head-quarters. They seem to have had little anxiety for the future in those circles. In fact, there, like everywhere else, the news of the defeat of the Prussian army in Bohemia, which was considered inevitable, was expected with the utmost confidence. It was not without significance, that the Austrian Ambassador, Count Ingelheim, had accompanied the King to the camp at Langensalza, and care was no doubt taken, that the hopes which rested in the secret plan of campaign of the Master of the Ordnance Benedek, should be maintained at a corresponding level.

Moreover, the news of the victory of the Austrian army at Custozza on the 24th of June may have reached Hanoverian head-quarters sooner than it reached us. There was no lack of despatches conveying accounts of alleged victories of the Austro-Saxon army during the first week of the campaign. The intentions of King George, therefore, were probably to await the next successes of the Austrian arms, whereupon he hoped to be able to shape his own course to Berlin. This in part explains his disinclination to abandon his position in Saxony, and his indetermination to advance too far to meet the Bavarians.

When, two days later, as I shall still have to relate, Lieutenant-Colonel von Reuter went on a mission from me

to the King of Hanover, he heard, in the Hanoverian camp on the 26th of June, all sorts of things about the supposed victories of the Austrians over the Prussians, and had great difficulty in finding credence with his denials.

By these manifold delusions, King George was led to the belief that it would be possible soon to put an end to the war in Prussia. He always thought the Bavarians ought rather to advance in a northerly direction, and was at a loss to understand what he was to do with his army in the south. Thus the utter particularism of the interests of both parties became evident, for nothing was more certain, than that the Bavarians on their part considered the Hanoverian cause of quite secondary importance, as I was afterwards assured on the best authority.

As to the military position, the Bavarians were by no means so far off, as not to have been able to occupy the Thuringian forest. We should not have had a single man to oppose them with there, and, although the only measures I could adopt, as I have remarked before, would have enabled us to obtain speedy news of their advance, they could not have prevented it.

In Berlin, it was said, they had proofs that negotiations between the Hanoverians and Prince Charles with regard to the union of the two armies had already taken place in Schweinfurt on the 19th of June. As a matter of fact, indeed, the Bavarian army began to move towards Fulda on the 22nd of June. But its course had to be altered again, on account of the occupation of Cassel by the Prussians. The news that the Hanoverians were marching to Langensalza, was apparently unwelcome to Prince Charles. He was loath to change his front, and thus the body of the Bavarian army remained stationary to the south of the Franconian Saale, until the 26th of June. Neustadt, Münnerstadt, Lauringen, and Königshofen, had been occupied, and the van-guard pushed forward as far as Umleben and Melrichstadt, but the reserves were still stationed in Schweinfurt. In the evening of the 26th of June, a light cavalry brigade reached Meiningen, and

approached so close on the following day, that a detachment had to be sent from Eisenach to Marksuhl.

In the Thuringian forest, however, one report followed upon the other respecting the apprehended advent of the Bavarians. They were expected to march through the valley of the Saale, and, on the 24th, they were said to be operating in the direction of Rudolstadt. The announcement that Bavarian cavalry patrols had been seen on the road to Schwarza on the 25th, was more correct, and, on the 26th, the incontestable and very serious news arrived from Suhl: '800 Bavarian Uhlans arrived this morning at 7 o'clock in and about Meiningen, coming from Schweinfurt; 8-10,000 men infantry, cavalry, and artillery, are camping at $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours' distance from Meiningen.' Nor was the report without interest, that 5000 Bavarians with 200 horsemen had been fetched on the 26th of June by the Duke of Meiningen himself, for the protection of the town and the country. They were said to have sent forward their outposts as far as Wernshausen, but had retired again, because Prussian horsemen had taken possession of the telegraph office in Wernshausen, and because troops were marching from Eisenach to Meiningen.

In spite of all these alarming reports, the movements of the Bavarian army, which were slow and uncertain, did not give one the impression as if Prince Charles were much inclined to turn the fate of the Hanoverian army. But the leaders of our Western army evidently felt the necessity of sending large bodies of troops eastwards, in order to intercept the march of the Hanoverians, as an interference with the projected plan of campaign, which was to advance as quickly as possible *via* Frankfort into Bavaria. It is to be supposed that differences prevailed with regard to these matters between the Grand General Staff and the Commanders of the Western army. But I see the less reason to discuss this question from my point of view, as nothing certain has ever become known about it in official form. Commanders and troops between Gotha and Eisenach were in those days merely convinced, that nothing short of a miracle could save us. For, if the Bavarians with their 5000 men had only continued their march on the

25th, they could have quietly taken up a position in Thuringia, in whatever spot they pleased, and threatened us in our rear to such an extent, that there could have been no idea of our attacking and surrounding the Hanoverian army.

When, in the morning of the 25th, I rode out with General von Alvensleben towards the positions of the enemy, and took account of all these political and military contingencies, it was ultimately always the thought of the personality of King George, from which I still derived the hope that the matter would be brought to a peaceful issue. The King, I said to Alvensleben, will scarcely desire to fight. He will yield at the last moment, when it is too late. I expressed my regret that we had no cavalry to dispose of. With a bold stroke, I would have ventured to throw everything in Oesterbehringen into such confusion, that we should have had the capitulation in twenty-four hours.

Whilst I was still indulging in surmises of this description, we saw a parlamentaire approaching in the distance, followed by a Royal carriage with Colonel Dammers. We were not a little surprised to hear that the King had again altered his decisions, and had at last determined to request General von Alvensleben for an interview. The latter consequently repaired at once to Hanoverian head-quarters, and returned to Gotha from Oesterbehringen at half-past eleven o'clock.

However, before he started, General von Alvensleben had informed me, that he no longer intended to treat on the basis of the telegram sent to me by Count Bismarck. Nor could I deny, indeed, that, in consequence of the battle that had taken place at Mechterstädt, and the King of Hanover's letter to me, the position of things had been altered. Yet I thought it my duty to request the General not to render the capitulation too difficult for the King and his army. He accordingly went to the Hanoverian head-quarters with the following conditions:

1. Dismissal of the Hanoverian soldiers to their homes.

2. Free passage to be granted to the King, the Crown Prince, and all the officers, with their arms, horses, and baggage, on condition that they undertake not to fight against Prussia.

The King of Hanover did not accept these conditions, but

demanded time for consideration. General von Alvensleben granted it for four-and-twenty hours, *i.e.*, until the 26th of June at ten o'clock in the morning, provided his King would consent. He agreed furthermore to a truce of arms, subject to three hours' notice. The King granted both these conditions by telegram from Berlin, whereupon Alvensleben returned to Berlin from Gotha at two o'clock.

During the whole day, one despatch came after the other. I had received news from Berlin, that General von Falckenstein himself would arrive in Eisenach in the afternoon. At two o'clock, General von Göben reported that he had sent a detachment of three battalions to Sättelstädt-Langensalza, and asked whether the six battalions had arrived in Gotha. In the evening, General von Falckenstein telegraphed that he had no news of the success of the negotiations of General von Alvensleben, and that he was making arrangements to let his troops advance, in order to commence an energetic attack at daybreak. I informed General von Moltke of this despatch, in order to bring about the understanding along the whole line, which was necessary in respect of the truce.

Meanwhile, General von Göben reported from Eisenach, that he was having the passes of the Thuringian forest occupied as far as Waltershausen by the Kummer brigade, leaving the Gotha detachment to secure that town.

In all these arrangements, an uncertainty as to the existing intentions was visible on all sides, and I greatly regretted that our troops had been ordered to retire. Had General von Göben transferred the Kummer brigade to Gotha, the enemy would most likely have withdrawn to a greater distance, and time would have been gained to allow General von Manteuffel to arrive in the rear of the Hanoverians. By this means, a serious battle with much bloodshed might have been prevented.

In the meantime, however, General von Falckenstein, at repeated requests from Berlin, had sent five battalions of infantry and a four-pound rifled battery *via* Magdeburg and Halle to Gotha. The troops were transferred to Waltershausen, and General von Fliess assumed the command in Gotha. I myself had gone to Wernigerode to take leave of

the Duchess, and thereupon held a conference with General von Fliess at half-past nine o'clock.

Soon after midnight, I was roused by a despatch from the King of Prussia, which ran:

'*To the Duke of Coburg and Gotha.*

'Until now I have received no intimation from the King of Hanover, but only the news that Bavarian troops have advanced as far as Vacha. I have ordered that no hostilities are to take place until to-day, Tuesday, at 10 A.M. But if the advance of the Bavarians in the rear of my troops is confirmed, I should consider the agreement broken, and proceed accordingly. Send an officer immediately to the King of Hanover, requesting him to telegraph me in any case before 10 o'clock, what he has to say with regard to Alvensleben's negotiations.—WILLIAM.'

In consequence of this telegram, I sent my aid-de-camp Lieutenant-Colonel von Reuter, at half-past two o'clock in the morning to the head-quarters of the Hanoverians. About the same time, Colonel von Döring of the General Staff had started from Berlin on a mission from General von Moltke to deliver an ultimatum to the King. But before these envoys could have succeeded in accomplishing their missions, Count Bismarck telegraphed to me at 2.39 A.M.

'Your Highness has no doubt just received a telegram from His Majesty with reference to the attitude of the troops towards the Hanoverians. After that telegram had gone, the report arrived here, that all the Hanoverian troops had marched through Mühlhausen, committing acts of hostility. I may assume that His Majesty would not have written the telegram referred to, but would have regarded the negotiations as broken off, and ordered the enemy to be pursued, had he been aware of this fact. The King, however, is not accessible to me at this hour of the night. Döring's mission is in consequence likewise obsolete.

'BISMARCK.'

The assumption of the departure of the Hanoverians, as was afterwards generally ascertained, was decidedly incorrect, and, owing to the reports we had in Gotha, I was naturally unable to share it. Unfortunately, however, this false news from Mühlhausen had also influenced the decisions of General von Falckenstein in Eisenach.

Early in the morning, Colonel von Döring arrived in Gotha, and reported himself to me. I informed him that Lieutenant-Colonel von Reuter had just gone to the head-quarters of the Hanoverians, in obedience to the King of Prussia's command, and was sure to return soon. Since Herr von Bismarck no longer considered Döring's mission desirable, it appeared suitable to await von Reuter's return. The latter eventually returned soon after eight o'clock, and brought back the most important news. He had met with a very confident feeling in the circles of the Court. They lived there under the delusion that the Austrians had gained great successes, both in Bohemia and in Italy, and were in hopes that, by marching backwards and forwards and parleying, they would be able to maintain their ground until the position of affairs assumed a more favourable shape.

I reported, as a matter of course, everything my aid-de-camp had ascertained, in the following despatch, which I sent to the King of Prussia at 8.22 A.M.

'Reuter returned from the King. The King said that he had sent Lieutenant-Colonel Rudorff to Berlin yesterday afternoon at ten o'clock with his reply, but that Rudorff had been detained in Eisenach by General von Falckenstein, because Falckenstein would not recognise the truce of arms. Rudorff would leave at once for Berlin with the reply.

'Reuter found the troops marching back to Langensalza without adopting any precautionary measures. They intended to remain there for the present, and to rely upon the truce. They allowed Reuter to convince himself of the truth of their statements, and declared that they stood entirely upon the standpoint of Alvensleben's negotiations, in particular truce subject to notice. Reuter remarked, that the matter would

rest there, excepting in case of an advance of the Bavarians, when action would at once be commenced against them. The King, he said, claimed Lieutenants Gumprecht and Count Bernstorff, whom General von Falckenstein had arrested as negotiators.

'DUKE OF COBURG.'

Colonel von Döring wavered for a long time, whether it would be necessary to deliver the ultimatum at Hanoverian head-quarters, since General von Alvensleben's truce had lapsed at ten o'clock, and General von Fliess with his detachment was already in the act of advancing against the army of the enemy. According to the reports from Eisenach, however, it seemed out of the question to reckon that day on any joint action with General von Göben. Consequently, at ten o'clock, the following telegram was sent by Döring to General von Moltke:

'I just hear from Captain Blume, that General von Göben has not followed; all the more occasion for me to go to Langensalza. Captain Blume will accompany me. General von Fliess with twelve battalions, three squadrons, and three batteries in two columns, marching from Gotha to Westhausen towards Langensalza, but thinks he will get no further than Henningsleben to-day. Have therefore still time to go to Langensalza to the King, and act in accordance with my instructions. No news from General von Falckenstein. I should like to know how far he gets to-day. A telegram sent to Gotha would be forwarded to me.

'COLONEL VON DÖRING.'

The absence of all news from General von Falckenstein was soon explained by a telegram from General von Göben, which was sent from Eisenach at noon, and contained the laconic announcement of Falckenstein's sudden departure for Hanover:

'Falckenstein left for Hanover, I remaining with eighteen battalions in Thuringia to meet any contingencies.

Am now transferring head-quarters to Gerstungen. Eisenach and Vacha occupied.

'V. GÖBEN.'

The total forces which might at this moment have been opposed to the Hanoverians, were fully sufficient to enforce a speedy capitulation, assuming, however, that our generals were determined to operate jointly. But I was unable to effect any really joint action in this direction. In the afternoon of the 26th of June, I went myself to General von Fliess, to reconnoitre the positions of the Hanoverians with him, and only returned to Gotha at a late hour.

General Fliess now had under his command: two battalions Coburg-Gotha, three battalions of the 11th regiment, two battalions of the 5th regiment, five or six battalions of militia, two troops of horse artillery, of the 7th and 8th regiments of artillery, four rifled guns of the 6th regiment of artillery, four guns of the Erfurt fort artillery, two squadrons of the Erfurt garrison, the depôt squadron of the 10th regiment of Hussars, which, however had only been formed a few days, and could not be employed.

On our advance towards Langensalza, we met Colonel von Döring, who had returned without effecting his purpose, as he had been unable to find the King. I had just expressed my opinion to General von Fliess, that the Hanoverians would again avoid meeting us, and would prefer to turn off again towards Eisenach, as they were probably sufficiently aware of the fact that Göben's troops had been re-transferred to Gerstungen and Vacha. The observations of Colonel von Döring, who had only seen few Hanoverian troops near Langensalza, agreed with this view. Nevertheless, I thought I ought to encourage him to make one more attempt to submit his ultimatum to the King of Hanover, and thus in the afternoon he at last succeeded in finding the King.

The ultimatum which Colonel von Döring had to deliver, again contained the proposal of an alliance on the basis of the conditions of the 14th of June. Von Döring has declared, that he read the ultimatum to the King, and that he en-

deavoured to induce him to accept it. But the King refused to enter again into negotiations on the political questions which he had already rejected. The Hanoverians adhered obstinately to the standpoint of the military position of affairs. In the meantime, Lieutenant-Colonel von Rudorff had gone to Gotha on a mission from the King of Hanover. From there, he now sent the following strange despatch to the King of Prussia:

'Lieutenant-Colonel Rudorff is instructed to proceed to Berlin to deliver the reply of His Majesty the King of Hanover to His Majesty the King of Prussia. He finds the troops of His Majesty the King of Prussia in the act of advancing. His Majesty the King of Hanover is of opinion that the truce concluded with General von Alvensleben still continues in force. The troops are therefore camping peacefully round Langensalza, until matters are decided. All hostilities are prohibited. I request that the General in command, von Fliess, be authorised to conclude the negotiations.

'RUDORFF, LIEUTENANT-COLONEL.'

Such a host of contradictory measures and declarations could only confirm my conviction that the negotiations of the Hanoverians served as a cloak to cover other purposes. The King wished to avoid a collision with the Prussian troops at any price, and indulged in the illusion that in a few days the victories of the Austrians in Bohemia, and the breaking forth of the Austro-Saxon army, would bring him relief. He thought, as, indeed, so many politicians in those days had expected, that he would be able to join the victorious army in Saxony or Brandenburg. In the evening of the 20th, therefore, the Hanoverians took up a defensive position on the left bank of the Unstrut between Thamsbrück and Nägelstedt. Langensalza remained occupied.

General von Fliess had not liked to undertake an attack that day, because the 11th regiment was still too far behind in its advance from Waltershausen. As the divisions von Göben and von Beyer had withdrawn to Gerstungen, and

General von Manteuffel also failed to advance, having halted in Göttingen on the 25th at Falckenstein's command, and having even received reinforcements from Eisenach, the weak force of General von Fliess was on the 26th, and unfortunately, as I must at once add, also on the 27th of June, still completely isolated. General von Fliess therefore considered it advisable to return in the evening of the 26th to his position near Westhausen.

This precaution was very justifiable, and I myself was far from giving General von Fliess any other advice. Still, I regretted at the time, that he would not agree to make a feigned attack by night, which, in my opinion, would have been attended by immediate results. A little unexpected cannonade near Langensalza late in the evening of the 26th would have been sure to cause a great shock to the King of Hanover. Moreover, the Hanoverians would probably have been induced to give up their fortified position near Henningsleben. Instead of this, the enemy was enabled to prepare for the next day, and take up the most favourable positions, whilst our little force had not gained the slightest prospect of being reinforced. What reasons induced General von Falckenstein still to delay the concentration of his troops, was unintelligible to me. I only recollect my considerable surprise, when I received the following despatch from Göben in Eisenach at 7.40.

'Returned here. Troops more concentrated. Departure of the Hanoverians over Mühlhausen was reported by Moltke. In consequence of this mistake, Manteuffel greatly reinforced in Göttingen. Whether still truce, or not, unknown here.

'VON GÖBEN.'

Just at this moment, the following order was received from the King of Prussia:

'To General von Falckenstein, or officer in command in Eisenach. Send after former. Hanoverians starting for Tennstedt and Sömmerda. I repeat the order from General von Moltke, that you are to concentrate all disposable forces

by march and rail, in order to enforce capitulation, *coûte que coûte*. Bavarians said to be in Meiningen. I have also notified General von Fliess.

'WILLIAM.'

If General von Fliess wished to obey this order of the King, there was no other possibility but for him to attack the enemy the next day in its fortified positions with his twelve to thirteen battalions. The troops of both sides stood closely confronting one another, and the first cannon-shot would presumably bring about a great battle with the whole concentrated Hanoverian army. Our position was then, in my opinion, a very precarious one, and could only be justified, if it was certain that General von Göben, with the forces situated near Eisenach,—I could not know at the moment, how many of the fifteen battalions which had been stationed there the day before, were still together—would arrive on the battlefield in time.

According to the reports last received, I was obliged to assume that General von Falckenstein was no longer in Eisenach. Whether the above-mentioned despatch from the King of Prussia had reached him in time, was therefore very doubtful.

Under these circumstances, I thought I ought to make an attempt, by my personal intervention in Eisenach, to procure General von Fliess assistance from there. I determined to go over to Eisenach myself in the night, and sent to the railway station to order a special train. The railway officials, however, flatly refused to undertake the journey. It was uncertain, they said, whether the railway which had been destroyed the day before, was already completely restored. No railway official could take upon himself such a responsibility. Whilst I was giving vent to my displeasure at this resistance, Lieutenant von Hochwächter approached me, and, assuring me that he was perfectly familiar with the management of the engine, declared himself ready to take me to Eisenach at once, if I would give the order to have an engine heated.

I ordered everything to be put in readiness, and, half-an-

hour afterwards, we were standing on the engine, Hochwächter acting as engine-driver, and a few artillerists as stokers and breakers. The troops camping in the station in Eisenach were not a little astonished to see an engine arrive, the communication in the direction of Gotha being still considered interrupted. General von Göben was at the station, and reported that General von Falckenstein had returned to Eisenach a few hours before, and had taken up his quarters in the town. I went to him, and had him roused, but I scarcely met with a warm welcome. The General declared that I was totally mistaken with regard to the position and the plans of the Hanoverians, and had unnecessarily taken the trouble to come over. When I remarked that General von Fliess would be confronted the next day by an overwhelming power, he flatly denied this, and endeavoured to prove that the Hanoverians had only left a small detachment behind them in Henningsleben and Langensalza. General von Fliess, he said, would have to face this detachment, and he had sufficient forces at his disposal for that purpose. I referred him to the King's despatch, and observed that he, as well as General Fliess, must obviously have received the unconditional order to attack, *coûte que coûte*.

With regard to this term, a droll misunderstanding had crept in, the words *coûte que coûte* having been read incorrectly by the telegraphist. General von Falckenstein said again and again, that he failed to understand what was meant by this *cuttle cuttle*. I had to establish the correct reading, whereupon the General quieted down a little, and at last admitted that the matter would have to be taken into consideration in the morning. I tried to induce him to send a few battalions to Gotha as soon as possible, and discussed what would have to be done, in case the enemy should intend to depart in an eastern direction.

After midnight, I returned to Gotha. The fatal 27th of June had dawned.

In the early morning, General von Fliess had sounded alarm and advanced in full battle array. In the forenoon, he deployed his forces in the direction of Merxleben, where the

enemy seemed determined to take up a strong defensive position. Indeed, my surmise that General von Fliess had the whole of the Hanoverian army before him, was in a few hours to receive a very sad confirmation.

I am not aware what arrangements had been made between General von Falckenstein and General Fliess. The reports and rumours which had reached Prussian head-quarters in the course of these days, contained so many contradictions, that the simple fact of the concentration of the Hanoverians near Langensalza was practically no longer believed by anybody. The Hanoverians were sought in Kirchheiligen, in Tennstedt, Sömmerda, in short, everywhere, except where they were.

It was said that the following dispositions had been made by General von Falckenstein for the 27th of June, though it was afterwards asserted that the order had never reached General von Fliess: 'General von Kummer to take up his position near Grossbehringen, and to establish the communication with Major-General von Fliess. Both have orders not to advance, so long as the Hanoverians remain stationed at Langensalza, but in other respects to show them a bold front. General von Manteuffel to march with thirteen battalions on the 27th of June from Göttingen to Heiligenstadt, and on the 28th of June to Mühlhausen. General von Göben to remain stationed near Eisenach with fifteen battalions and the division Beyer.

If these dispositions were really made, it is certain that they were scarcely adhered to by any one in the course of the 27th of June. General von Göben advanced to the attack southwards into the valley of the Werra, and General von Fliess beyond Langensalza, whilst General von Manteuffel never reached Heiligenstadt. If, therefore, a battle took place on the Unstrut, I was of opinion that the far weaker battalions of General von Fliess would be without any support, and possibly greatly endangered.

The reader will conceive how impatiently I waited on the 27th of June for the arrival in Gotha of the assistance promised me in the night by General von Falckenstein. But

instead of his battalions, he only sent Captain von Jena. The Captain had received instructions to enquire after the position of the enemy. I ordered Lieutenant-Colonel von Reuter to accompany Captain von Jena to the camp of General von Fliess, where they both arrived long after the General had left and was already on the march towards Langensalza. As I learned later on, Captain von Jena found General von Fliess just at the moment when the battle had been commenced. His reports, therefore, would certainly have arrived much too late, even if General von Göben and the brigade Kummer had been on the spot in Eisenach and Grossbehringen on the 27th of June.

But nothing could have sounded more desperate on this hot day, than a report from General von Göben, by communicating which, I somewhat anticipate the sequence of events. At a quarter to five, in the middle of the battle of Langensalza, whilst I myself was still on the scene of action, the following despatch arrived in Gotha:

'*To His Highness the Duke of Coburg-Gotha.*

'General von Falckenstein left for Cassel, conferring command here upon me, and entrusting General von Manteuffel with the operations against the Hanoverians. Affair Fliess mere rear-guard cannonade. Enemy will depart during the night. Railway quite secured. Strong posts pushed forward into the mountains.

'Von Göben.'

When Lieutenant-Colonel von Reuter and Captain von Jena went to General von Fliess in the morning, I gave them orders to notify me as quickly as possible, in case General von Fliess had really begun to attack. At noon, the news came that the battle had commenced, whereupon I at once mounted horse, and repaired with the greatest speed to the field of battle.

We had scarcely ridden half-an-hour from Gotha towards Henningsleben, when the roar of the cannon became audible. I just reached the scene of action, as our troops, still fighting,

were retreating from their positions beyond the Unstrut, which had already been taken. The heat of the day was extraordinary, and I found our troops extremely exhausted from their long march and the battle, which had been carried on with the utmost vigour during the hours of noon. My regiment especially had suffered terribly. Yet it could be seen at a glance, that the worst was still in store for these brave and courageous men, in the course of an excessively difficult retreat.

It is not my intention to furnish a complete account of the course and the issue of this often described battle.

It is well-known that the attack on Langensalza was opened by Colonel von Fabeck, who first occupied the town with the 1st and 4th company of my Coburg battalion, that the Hanoverians were then driven back over the Unstrut, and a commanding position was obtained for our artillery by the taking of the Judenhügel. The artillery fight had already lasted for many hours, when, at one o'clock, Lieutenant-General von Arentsschildt thought the moment arrived to commence the attack upon the enemy, who was by this time seen to be numerically the weaker. The brigades Bülow and Knesebeck were accordingly to cross the Unstrut, and advance against our left wing.

Although our artillery was still posted on the Judenhügel, and was doing the Hanoverians great damage, the Prussian riflemen who were fighting on the extreme left wing, and amongst whom were one or two divisions of the Coburg battalion, were compelled, after the brigade Bülow had crossed over the Unstrut, to seek cover in the mill and near Gräser's factory.

Many of the men fell fainting from exhaustion. Still, I succeeded in gathering the nearest troops and companies of the 11th and 25th regiments on a little eminence before the town, and taking up a regular position to receive the remainder of the troops, who were now retreating under a very heavy fire. The right flank of our position, a wide mountain plain, was in the utmost danger from the incessant attacks of three of the enemy's cavalry regiments. Squares and rings had to be formed again and again, in order to repel the attacks of

the enemy's cavalry, which was accomplished with the greatest loss to the enemy.

The 1st battalion of the 11th regiment was in particular danger. Lieutenant-Colonel des Barres with two companies of this battalion fought heroically against the Cambridge Dragoons, and Captain von Rosenberg with the two other companies against the Life Guards, both having to effect their retreat quite isolated on the extreme left wing, and take up a large number of routed militia-men into their squares. The attack of the enemy's cavalry was made with such violence, that the horses which were struck by the bullets, not unfrequently rushed right into the squares, wounding and creating disorder among our men. A captain of the Cambridge Dragoons was hewn down in the middle of the square in which Lieutenant-Colonel des Barres was stationed.

Unfortunately, during the retreat from Langensalza, two guns of the fort-artillery, which had exhausted their munition, were lost. They had stuck fast in a ditch, in a half dismantled condition. At my desire, Lieutenant von Hochwächter with a few Erfurt Dragoons made an attempt to save the guns, under heavy fire from the enemy, but endeavoured in vain to bring them on.

I was more fortunate at another spot, where I undertook to hold back the artillery, which was retreating from the Judenhügel, in order to cover the retreat of the troops beyond Langensalza. Among others, I found also Major Petzel with his two troops of horse artillery, likewise in the act of retreating, and used every means to induce him to make a fresh stand, as otherwise the pursuit of the Hanoverians was bound to become fatal to our infantry. Although he could only do so under heavy fire from the enemy, and it was impossible to effect a regular cover, yet I told him that it was absolutely necessary to dismount.

Petzel was at first rather taken aback by my demand. But he collected himself, and said with the humorous determination peculiar to him: 'Very well, Your Highness, then first give me your flask, for this will be no child's play,' and, after taking a hearty draught from my flask, he gave orders to

draw up, dismount, and recommence fire. However, it was not possible to effect much from here, as the Hanoverians with their far-carrying guns were still able to graze our line of retreat, whilst Major Petzel with his smooth cannons could not reach the Hanoverian artillery. The field artillery in the year 1866 was by no means all equipped with rifled cannons, which frequently placed us at a great disadvantage. In the heavy fire under which we stood, we had to deplore the bitter loss of many a brave artillerist. Among others, Lieutenant Stichling of Weimar, who was a universal favourite, met here with a hero's death.

It was curious to reflect that the excellent rifled guns of the Hanoverians, which were now sending death into our ranks, had, but a short time before, been presented to King George by the King of Prussia. Although Major Petzel was not able to do much damage to the enemy's artillery, the fact of our resuming the firing gave rise to the idea on the part of the Hanoverians, that they had encountered fresh active forces. I promised Major Petzel, in order to secure him against any surprise, to reconnoitre the neighbourhood. In order to ascertain whether there was any danger of a flank-attack on the part of the enemy's cavalry, I rode forward to the right. As I was galloping down a decline in a field of high corn, I suddenly found myself in a hollow opposite the Hanoverian cavalry, which was reforming. Uncertain whether I had been noticed or not, I turned my horse's head, and galloped back to Major Petzel, in order to cause the battery to make an immediate change of front. In a few minutes, the attack of the enemy's squadron might ensue. It was a moment of grave suspense. Fortunately for us, nothing came, and, to my astonishment, I soon afterwards saw the enemy retreating.

The omission of the anticipated manœuvre was so strange, that, after the capitulation of the Hanoverians, I endeavoured to learn the cause. I found an opportunity of discussing the subject with one or two cavalry officers, and heard, to my surprise, that the Hanoverians had been in the belief that considerable forces were advancing in our rear from Gotha.

The heights to the right of the road from Langensalza, they said, had been seen occupied in all directions by great multitudes. As a matter of fact, this had really been the case. But the crowds that had been visible, were not troops, but thousands of spectators, who had flocked together, since the forenoon, from all parts of the neighbourhood, and were watching the battle from not very distant points.

Time went on, and still night and darkness would not set in, which we were longing for, in the hope that the enemy's fire would at last cease. If, notwithstanding, the retreat was executed in the best order, this was a proof of the unbroken discipline of the little corps, which had to yield to an overwhelming force of nearly double its number. During the whole afternoon, I had failed to meet with General von Fliess, and it was not until a late hour that I at last found him ill from the consequences of a sun-stroke, which kept him from his post for some time.

In the night, the troops camped in exactly the same positions which they had left in the morning. Hundreds of wounded had been conveyed to Gotha, where the population evinced a touching sympathy for friend and foe. Gifts were sent from all the neighbouring places. The Grand-Duke of Weimar ordered ice to be forwarded to the hospital, and numerous physicians placed their services at my disposal. Everywhere, endeavours were made to help and alleviate.

Notwithstanding, the situation remained a very serious one. In the evening, when I discussed matters with General von Fliess, it appeared to both of us beyond all doubt, that the Hanoverian troops would take the offensive the next morning. I therefore addressed another despatch to General von Göben, which ran as follows:

'General Fliess declares that he cannot hold his ground, unless he receives fresh troops for the night to relieve the outposts. The Hanoverians are still pushing forward, and will attack us in the early morning. Help must be procured. Losses considerable.

'ERNEST.'

Hereupon, the reply came:

'Opposite Eisenach: enemy's troops suddenly appearing. Have sounded alarm; am ascending the heights. Consequently cannot send detachment. Will dispose according to circumstances to-morrow.

'Von Göben.'

They were now gradually beginning to convince themselves in Eisenach, that, what had been taken for a skirmish of rear-guards in the forenoon, had after all been a more important affair. Late at night, General von Göben notified me that he would at once despatch two battalions to Gotha, and send three further battalions and a troop of horse artillery with rifled cannons early the next morning.

Fortunately, the Hanoverians themselves were not in the position to assume the offensive, as we apprehended. In fact, as we afterwards learned, they were no less exhausted than we were. Their cavalry had executed a series of attacks with the greatest bravery, but, as our battalions had up to the last moment again and again offered an energetic resistance, they, too, had suffered fearful losses. It was fortunate for us that the attacks of the Hanoverians had not been made in better tactical form; besides, in the many hours during which the fight lasted, their infantry and artillery had spent nearly all their munition. Thus, as a matter of fact, exhaustion had set in on both sides, and to speak of a real victory, could only occur to the passionate party spirit of the next few years.

In the course of the evening, I was able to release no end of Hanoverians from a position of great distress, and ordered them to be transported to the hospitals of Gotha. Here, my body physician, Dr Hassenstein, had hastily organised the sanitary service, and was performing wonders. But the overwhelming number of soldiers who had been wounded in this battle, unfortunately rendered all provision inadequate. On our side, 44 officers and 786 men were dead or wounded, whilst the loss of the Hanoverians was estimated at 103 officers and 1323 men.

It was no doubt to be regretted, that, in spite of the great bravery of our troops and their immense sacrifices, the battle of Langensalza ended for the moment in an apparently unsatisfactory manner. However, no one expected that the Hanoverians were about to attribute the victory of the day to themselves. Tactically, the success was unquestionably on the side of the Hanoverians, but, strategically, they were already lost, when they accepted the battle. Its consequences, in a political respect, were necessarily of a most far-reaching nature, and, since the army, after the battle, was, as a matter of fact, placed *hors de combat*, the circumstance that it had maintained its position round Langensalza, was surely of no consequence.

By the defeat of the Hanoverian army, the campaign of the Western army was rendered possible, and the moral effect which the battle produced, paved the way for its further exploits. At the same time, the affair of Langensalza afforded a brilliant refutation of all the mistrust which people had made a pretence of cherishing against the ability of the Prussian Landwehr. The Landwehr battalions had fought excellently, and, although the war waged by Germans against Germans was felt everywhere as something profoundly sad, yet the action of Langensalza was in a manner the first proof of the unerring sense of duty which animated the Prussian troops.

In the early morning of the 28th of June, I was awakened by the arrival of the brigade Kummer, which came from Eisenach, and camped in front of my palace and in the avenues before the Friedenstein. At eight o'clock, at last, the artillery promised by von Göben also arrived, and in the course of the morning the thirteenth regiment came in.

General Kummer took up a position with the view to the immediate defence of Gotha, whilst General Fliess remained in his advanced position near Warza on the Grenzberg. General von Göben moved forward along the road to Langensalza, whilst, on the 28th, General von Manteuffel's vanguard advanced as far as Rothenheiligen and Alt-Gottern.

The enemy threatened to bombard Gotha, and break through with his whole forces, unless he were allowed free

passage to the south. General von Fliess refused to comply with this demand, so that from hour to hour a fresh battle was expected. At eleven o'clock, I went to the castle to watch the movements of the troops, and then rode out to General Fliess, who was just at that moment in treaty with a Hanoverian parlamentaire.

The Hanoverians had now doubtless become aware that they could in no way count upon being relieved by the Bavarians. The little outpost skirmish which had taken place in the morning of the 27th between Bavarian and Prussian troops near Wernshausen, remained without any importance in respect of the position of the Hanoverians. The latter recognised that there was nothing to hinder General von Göben in operating from Eisenach. Even had Prince Charles really been urged in Munich and Vienna to lend his hand in saving the King of Hanover, the great body of Bavarian troops would have been unable to reach the spot in time. Under these circumstances, the negotiations for the capitulation were commenced by the Hanoverians in the evening of the 28th.

Before it came to this, every means had been exhausted to save the army in some other way. In the night from the 27th to the 28th, Lieutenant-Colonel Rudorff had been sent to General von Fliess to request a truce of several days, for the purpose, as it was alleged, of burying the dead. According to a letter from Lieutenant-General von Arentsschildt, the Hanoverians intended, in case of a refusal, to make an immediate attack upon Gotha. As General von Fliess at once absolutely declined the truce, Major-General von dem Knesebeck was announced in the afternoon of the 28th, and demanded permission to proceed to Berlin on a mission from the King of Hanover to the King of Prussia. General von Fliess of course refused such permission, whereupon a letter from Lieutenant-General von Arentsschildt came with the formal proposal to capitulate. General von Fliess allowed me to see this document, after which I returned to Gotha. Here, rumours of proposals for the capitulation of the Hanoverian army had been circulating among the inhabitants since noon. A large

crowd of people had consequently assembled in front of my palace, where they steadily awaited my arrival. At last I returned. When I heard that the townsfolk, who, for many days, had suffered so much anxious excitement, were in hopes that I should confirm the rumoured desire of the Hanoverian army to capitulate, I lost no time in doing so, whereupon an immense shout of joy rose up from the assembled crowd. And indeed, there was every reason to rejoice, for it was only now that the town could feel itself safe again.

In the evening, General von Göben announced himself, and remained with his aid-de-camp until ten o'clock. He brought me the news, that, in consequence of the report of yesterday's bloody battle, General von Falckenstein had gone back to Eisenach, and would now take up his head-quarters in Grossbehringen. General von Fliess was therefore able to give his Commander speedy notice of the capitulation offered by General von Arentsschildt. However, he also made a simultaneous report to the King in Berlin.

The consequence was, that diverging decisions again ensued, General von Falckenstein ordering Major Wiebe tc negotiate the conditions of the capitulation in Langensalza, whilst, in Berlin, General von Manteuffel was selected to conduct the negotiations.

It stands to reason, that I only subsequently ascertained the details of the capitulation, the painful negotiations of which dragged on for the next few days. I, for my person, had meanwhile taken part in a little episode, which I should not like to pass over in silence. On the previous day, a personal aid-de-camp of the Duke of Meiningen, Captain von Engel, had been captured by the troops, just as he was about to start with post horses for the north. The next morning, he was arrested in Gotha as a suspected spy, and delivered to the officer in command, Captain von Wangenheim. He at once requested this officer to procure him an audience with me, for the purpose of clearing himself of the accusation resting upon him. As I knew that Captain von Engel enjoyed the confidence of Duke Bernhard of Meiningen, I had no objection to grant him the desired audience. But I made no secret, that

in face of the political position which the Duke of Meiningen had taken up, I considered Engel's whole behaviour, to say the least, very imprudent and improper, and told the man quite frankly that I had no doubt what his fate would be, if matters were allowed to take their course. However, owing to my relations to the Court of the Duke of Meiningen, I desired to see the whole matter buried, and contented myself with advising Captain von Engel to keep quite quiet, as he would not be likely to find another saviour, if he fell into our hands again. He then went to Liebenstein, but, if I am not mistaken, he was subsequently again taken prisoner by the Prussian troops on a similar suspicion.

For the rest, I commissioned Captain von Engel to represent to his master in my name the great danger in which his family was placed, for I had no doubt that the Prussians would treat Meiningen as they had treated Hesse-Cassel. As late as the 27th, the infatuation of Duke Bernhard was so great, that he fancied the Bavarians might after all arrive in time, and he had consequently entrusted Captain von Engel with the mission to induce the King of Hanover to delay the capitulation at least for another two days.

I refrain from describing the famous events in Langensalza. As King William not only entrusted the negotiations to the mild hands of General von Manteuffel, but also ordered General von Moltke to show every conceivable consideration to the brave and unfortunate army, the conclusion of peace was effected with comparative speed. The Hanoverian army was dismissed to its native country, with an express acknowledgment of the brave bearing of the troops. The material welfare of the officers was secured, and full liberty granted to the King to reside wherever he pleased outside of Hanover.

On the 29th, I sent my Minister von Seebach to the King, to invite him to be my guest in the Friedenstein, as long as he desired, or until he had decided as to his future residence. However, my offer was not accepted. My Minister returned after a few hours, and reported that he had met with a particularly bitter feeling at the King's head-quarters. Under these circumstances, I did not think it proper to

appear at the railway station at the arrival and departure of the King and his Court early in the morning of the 30th.

On the 29th of June, meanwhile, the Hanoverian troops had held their entry into Gotha, and were camping in the streets, the cavalry on foot, and the officers with sticks in their hands in lieu of weapons. The men preserved exemplary order, and gratefully accepted the assistance afforded them by the townsfolk. I had ridden out of the town to meet them, and conversed with one or two acquaintances of the officers' corps, on which occasion I received the above-mentioned information with regard to various incidents of the battle of Langensalza.

On the 30th of June, the army, having been disbanded, was conveyed from Gotha by rail to Hildesheim and Celle.

The personal fate of the Hanoverian family caused manifold enquiries to be addressed to me. The telegram from the Queen of England, which was despatched late in the evening of the 28th of June, but only came into my hands the next day, will not be read without interest. It ran as follows:

'*Duke of Coburg-Gotha.*

'Thank God that you are uninjured. It is too dreadful. Where is the poor King and his son?

'THE QUEEN.'

It was not until the 30th of June, that I was in the position to give the desired information with full certainty, and I telegraphed back to the Queen:

'The King of Hanover and the Crown Prince passed through Gotha early this morning in the best health on their way to Altenburg. I am leaving to-day for the army in Bohemia.

'ERNEST.'

I had at once made a report to the King of Prussia on the 28th of June, detailing the events that had taken place, and,

as I assumed that my task here in Germany would in all cases be accomplished within the next few days, I had enquired at the same time, where I should find the Crown Prince, to whom the King had attached me. The King answered on the 30th of June, from Berlin:

'As both armies are very close together, I think the best way to my son is *via* my head-quarters on the Reichenberg route. Many thanks for your first news of the Langensalza battle. Although the issue was not the desired one, still it became the cause of the capitulation. Your troops are said to have fought splendidly.

'WILLIAM.'

In obedience to the King's command, I fixed my departure for the same evening, and intended, after a short stay in Berlin, to repair as quickly as possible to the seat of war in Bohemia, as I had the feeling that a great action was imminent there.

CHAPTER XI

IN BERLIN.—REACTION OF FEELING IN GERMANY.—THE DUKE'S PROGRESS TO HEAD-QUARTERS IN BOHEMIA.—INCIDENTS OF THE JOURNEY.—FIRST SYMPTOMS OF THE BATTLE OF KÖNIGGRÄTZ.—PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES.—MEETING WITH KING WILLIAM.—UNEXPECTED RESULTS OF THE BATTLE. — DISCUSSION ON THE OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL STAFF.—THE KING'S PERSONAL MODESTY.—NEGOTIATIONS WITH AUSTRIA.—FEARS OF A TRUCE.—THE CESSION OF VENETIA TO FRANCE.—INDIGNATION OF THE CROWN PRINCE.—THE TRUCE FAILS.—THE ALTERED FEELING IN THE COUNTRY.—THE DUKE RECEIVES NEWS FROM HOME.—THE OCCUPATION OF COBURG BY THE BAVARIANS.—MOVEMENTS OF THE ARMY IN AUSTRIA.—SUSPICIOUS OCCURRENCES IN OPPATOWITZ.—THE POSITION OF THE PRUSSIAN FORCES.—UNCERTAINTY AS TO THE ENEMY'S INTENTIONS. — THREATENED INACTIVITY OF THE CROWN PRINCE'S ARMY.—FRESH BATTLES.—IN PROSSNITZ AND PRÖDLITZ.—RENEWED RUMOURS OF A TRUCE.—AUSTRIA'S SECESSION FROM THE GERMAN CONFEDERATION.—THE PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE. — DIFFICULTIES OF AUSTRIA'S POSITION. — COUNT BISMARCK AND THE CROWN PRINCE.—THE KING'S UNWILLINGNESS TO PRESS THE ANNEXATION QUESTIONS.—THE CROWN PRINCE OVERCOMES HIS SCRUPLES.—THE DUKE'S INTERVIEWS WITH COUNT BENEDETTI AND COUNT DEGENFELD.—THE CONCLUSION OF PEACE. —THE DUKE'S PARTING AUDIENCE WITH THE KING.—HOME.

When I arrived in Berlin in the morning of the 1st of July, I found a great part of the town still decorated with flags. Upon the news of the capitulation of the Hanoverians, and the simultaneous reports of the victorious progress of the army in Bohemia, a visible reaction had taken place in the mood of the people, which, until then, had been depressed. On the 29th of June, so I was informed, all Berlin had been on its legs to pay homage to the King in front of his palace

Unter den Linden. The enthusiastic populace had wanted to unharness the horses of Count Bismarck's carriage, in order to carry him home in triumph. An enormous crowd of people was streaming from the Royal Palace to the Count's residence. In its midst, a carriage was to be seen, upon which a flag had been hoisted, adorned with an iron cross. Everybody crowded in front of Count Bismarck's windows, where tumultuous ovations took place. The people wished to hear particulars of the capitulation of the Hanoverian troops, and Count Bismarck is said to have complied with their request, and to have communicated several details of the event to a deputation sent up to him for that purpose. Men who were familiar with the relations of the parties in Berlin, assured me a few days afterwards, that, in certain circles of the capital, the sudden downfall of the Hanoverian monarchy had produced an impression which no one had been able to resist.

Altogether, the last days of June marked a great epoch in the sentiments of the German races of the North and the South. Here, men had suddenly sunk from the sense of mistaken aversions and morbid irritability to the consciousness of ineffable weakness and political incompetence. There, even the most obstinate doctrinarism had been converted by the force of events. Those who had hitherto been unable to bear the hard thought of a German civil war, were now made advocates of the good cause by the awakening hopes for the grand result of the brief duel.

The King had left for Bohemia on the 30th of June, with the General Staff, and accompanied by Count Bismarck. At noon, I visited the Queen, and was invited to dinner by her at 5 o'clock, when I met Prince George. As the Queen was greatly concerned about the fate of the Hanoverian family, I could scarcely satisfy all the enquiries which she addressed to me in reference to the events of the last days. However, I was unable to ascertain anything definite in Berlin as to the state of affairs in Bohemia, and therefore had the prospect of having to go in search of the King's head-quarters on my own account. I received orders to proceed *via* Görlitz to

Reichenberg, whither I started in the evening at 11 o'clock, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel von Reuter and Lieutenant von Schleinitz of the 7th Regiment of Cuirassiers, as well as by Assessor Tschäck. The latter served me as secretary during the whole campaign. Unfortunately, however, only a small portion of the documents which I collected during the campaign, have been preserved. In describing the incidents of my four weeks' march and my stay in Bohemia and Moravia, I am therefore more than usually dependent on my recollections and the brief entries in my diary. But the impressions of this stirring period were sufficiently profound and powerful to allow of my reckoning with some certainty on the faithfulness of my memory.

The principally Sclavonic districts of the two countries through which I passed, presented, on the whole, a sad and strange picture. A few miles from the Saxon frontier, one might have thought oneself transferred to the extreme East. The straw-covered, low huts of the extensive Sclavonic villages, and the large country seats and grand castles, built for the most part in the seventeenth century, which towered aloft here and there, formed a striking contrast with the rich industrial districts on this and the other side of the German frontier. Most of the inhabitants of the partly squalid townships had fled with their cattle and household effects into the neighbouring forests. The mountainous country, which consists principally of arable soil, bore a monotonous character. As soon as one quitted the so-called 'Imperial Highways,' the roads became wretched. The lack of railways, which was then still so great, struck the Prussian soldier as especially remarkable. We marched for many a day along the flat road, without noticing a railroad anywhere. The want of drinkable liquor in these parts of the extensive Empire was particularly painful. The population subsisted chiefly on brandy prepared in a primitive way from plums. The maintenance of the rapidly advancing army in districts which had just been occupied by the enemy, caused the Prussian Intendancy the greatest difficulties. In the last weeks, when the health of the army was beginning to suffer, the distress became still

greater. Soldiers of the defeated army, who had been taken prisoners, routed, or wounded, were sometimes found in a fearful condition, and actually dying from want of nourishment.

In all parts, the Austrian officials, perhaps misunderstanding the orders of their Government, had abandoned their offices and seats of administration, before the appearance of the Prussian troops.

After the first terrible news of the defeat of the army, the gross of the population evinced an Indian-like timidity towards the Prussian troops, and it took more than a fortnight before the people in the communes and towns had so far regained their senses, that a regular intercourse could be established. Even the foolish lie had been circulated, that the young men in the occupied towns were captured by the Prussians, and the tall ones selected, in order to be pressed into the King's service. Forsooth, a droll anachronism!

After a long and often interrupted journey, I at last reached Reichenberg on the 2nd of July at a quarter to ten o'clock in the evening. The frequent stoppages of the train at every small station had worked me into a state of the utmost impatience. According to the latest news, there was no doubt that both armies were being concentrated on the Upper Elbe, and I therefore suspected that a great decisive battle would be fought in the course of the next few days. Under these circumstances, every hour's delay seemed to me an irreparable loss of time, and I endeavoured at every large station, but unfortunately in vain, to obtain a special train, which I hoped might bring me sooner to the King's headquarters.

After I had reached Reichenberg, the train I had hitherto travelled by, stopped for good. An officer was in charge of the station, and I requested him to have me taken on. But I received the answer, that he had no rolling stock at his disposal, and no instructions to accelerate my journey. Although I was loath to submit to this delay, I at last let myself be persuaded to stop for the night in Reichenberg, and took up my quarters in the castle of Count Clam-Gallas.

But my astonishment may be conceived, when I after-

wards learnt, that the Grand-Duke of Mecklenburg had arrived in Reichenberg an hour later, and that the officer on duty at the station actually had instructions to convey the Grand-Duke that night by special train with all possible speed to the King's head-quarters. When I heard of the matter, the Grand-Duke and his train were already miles away, and I was put off till the next morning. The day which then dawned, was the 3rd of July, on which the battle of Königgrätz was fought.

At nine o'clock, I travelled *via* Liebenau to Turnau, where I reached the end of my railway journey. The station in Turnau was half in ruins, and I received an animated account of the battle that had been fought here a few days before, from the officer on duty.

In the afternoon, we rode to Gitschin, and, in the evening, took up our quarters in the castle of Count Schlick, which is situated in the neighbourhood. In the night, an orderly officer arrived from the King with the news that the head-quarters were in Horschitz. I gave instructions to have our horses saddled at early dawn, in order to reach Horschitz as quickly as possible. During our ride, we became more and more impressed with the conviction that a great battle must have been fought on the previous day. I met innumerable Austrian prisoners on the way, of all arms and regiments. These people, whom I sometimes spoke to, gave us the strangest information.

In Horschitz I found the streets and the market-place crowded with prisoners and wounded soldiers. After my arrival, I reported myself to the Commander-in-chief, Prince Frederick Charles, who received me most kindly, and seemed much inclined to pour out his overflowing heart to me. The events of the previous day had gathered a few dark clouds on the brow of the excellent Prince, of which his friends declared, that they had never been quite dispelled, even in later years, and by the abundance of the greatest deeds of war that ever a general has had to record. Prince Frederick Charles always looked upon the famous and remarkable course of the tactical events of the 3rd of July as the stroke of an evil fate in

respect of his own glory and ambition. That, after the most brilliant exploits of his own army, it was ultimately the Crown Prince, who, as it were, drew the whole success upon himself, ever remained a depressing thought to Frederick Charles. The Prince kept me to breakfast, during which I was assailed by a host of acquaintances with questions about the Langensalza affair.

The King had driven out to the battlefield in the course of the day, so that I could not announce myself to His Majesty until the evening. Our meeting on this day, after the great decisive battle of the 3rd of July, was a stirring one. While graciously receiving my congratulations upon this victory, the enormous dimensions of which were only gradually being recognised in their full extent at head-quarters, the King also evinced himself full of gratitude to me personally for the results of the last week. He asked me to make him a report the next day, on all the events which had led to the capitulation of the Hanoverians. I was therefore instructed to remain another day at his head-quarters.

In the evening, the Crown Prince arrived with the Chief of the Staff, General von Stosch, Captain von Jasmund, and Count Eulenburg, and was obliged to share my lodgings, as there were no other quarters available in Horschitz. We sat together until late at night. To my regret, however, I had to let him ride away alone the next morning, and could only promise to repair to his head-quarters as soon as the King had dismissed me.

At two o'clock, I had the King's commands to join the Royal dinner party. Before dinner, I gave him an account of my experiences during the past week. The King showed an extremely mild and conciliatory spirit towards the King of Hanover, and deplored the obstinacy he had displayed during the negotiations. He appeared hardly to understand what further development the Hanoverian question would take. Of an annexation of the kingdom, there was not yet the remotest idea.

During dinner, continual reports came in, at which the King and his Generals evinced absolute surprise. No one had

dared to think of such military successes. Until then, no approximately correct idea had been conceived of the number of the cannons and prisoners taken. It took a long time, before the fact that the hostile army was in a state of complete disruption, could be regarded as established at headquarters.

In the evening, when I again had orders to attend the King, I was present at a remarkable Conference. The report which was to be published by the General Staff as the first official intimation concerning the course of the battle of Königgrätz, was submitted to the King. This rather detailed document was read by the Chief of the Staff, General von Moltke, and the King took an active share in correcting it. The work had excited his feelings in no small degree. At some passages, it was only by a great effort that he managed to master his emotion. The report described in bold and successful outlines the development of the battles, from the taking of Saxony to the gathering of the armies on the Bistritz. It then proceeded to give a brief plastic description of the ground on which the battle took place, and then represented all the particulars of the decisive day with telling vigour. At some passages, little differences arose between the views of the King and those of the editors, and the discussion at times became very animated. In most cases, the acute, sober judgment of the King, which no desire for effect could lead astray, maintained a complete victory over the editors of his General Staff. However, at one passage, which appeared at first only to occasion the King's mirth, the circle around him would not agree to an alteration at any price, and strongly represented to His Majesty that no concession should be made here to his Royal modesty.

In the report, it was said: 'His Majesty the King proceeded, at the head of the reserve cavalry of the first army, to pursue the enemy between Sadowa and Maslowa in the direction of Strebesitz. It was half-past three o'clock.'

On hearing this, His Majesty said, smiling: 'What did the King do?' It cost some trouble to prevail upon the King,

unassuming and simple-minded as he was, to allow it to be represented, how his own person had taken a decisive part in those hours. One had the impression as if he wished entirely to blot out his own 'self' from the memory of that tremendous experience. But the General Staff, in reporting the battle of Königgrätz, very rightly refused to dispense with the important action of the King, and thus the passage was retained.

After the King had dismissed part of the officers, I stayed on to tea with him, and did not take leave until late in the evening, in order to start early the next morning for the Crown Prince's quarters.

The following day was devoted far more to politics and diplomatic discussions than to military measures. It stands to reason, that, by virtue of the confidential position in which I stood to the Crown Prince, it was simply my duty, in my humble way, to exercise an influence on the political councils. Hence I sometimes had occasion, both then and afterwards, to see my views and proposals adopted.

Such was our position, when Field-marshal von Gablentz appeared after the battle of Königgrätz on a special mission at the head-quarters of the King. There could be no doubt that, in order to attain a speedy understanding, King William, after the great success of Königgrätz, was disposed to build up every possible bridge for the Austrian Power, with which he had ever been on a friendly footing. Now, the selection of General von Gablentz as envoy made it dangerously likely that the leaders of the war on the Prussian side would show too yielding a spirit. In particular, there was the fear that the full harvest of the military successes might not redound so much to the advantage of the general relations of Germany, as we desired, and the fact that the Crown Prince always firmly and resolutely urged and advocated the aims of Count Bismarck and the allies of Germany with his father and King, not unfrequently, indeed, by boldly asserting his lawful claims as heir to the throne, may perhaps be mentioned here as a merit which has never been sufficiently appreciated.

General von Gablentz had arrived at the Prussian head-quarters in Horschitz in the afternoon of the 4th of July, and

had proposed the cessation of useless hostilities, as the campaign was now to all intents and purposes decided. When I reached Horschitz that day, the parlamentaire had not yet been dismissed. Only late in the evening, after the arrival of the Crown Prince, General von Gablentz, who, moreover, was by no means furnished with sufficient authority, was sent back with the answer that Prussia would at all times be ready to treat a definite peace on a political basis. Nor did the Prussian military commanders evince themselves altogether disinclined to conclude a three days' truce, provided that the fortresses Theresienstadt, Josephstadt, and Königgrätz, were delivered up.

As, however, during the next few days, no announcement of any kind was received, the Austrians had apparently changed their mind again. To all appearances, Herr von Gablentz had made his proposal in pursuance of an agreement with Benedek. Indeed, a few days afterwards, the news arrived, first as a vague rumour, but then as an only too sure expression of the actual event, that the Emperor of Austria had not only applied for the intervention of the Emperor Napoleon, but had also ceded Venetia to him. This decision of our opponents seemed to imply that they were determined in Vienna to continue the struggle with Prussia for life or death, and to carry it on *à outrance*.

I can still distinctly remember the profound grief which was felt at head-quarters by high and low at this step of Austria. Under the circumstances, I was not a little surprised, when, in the early morning of the 8th of July, the Crown Prince entered my room in Chrustowitz, and informed me that Lieutenant-Fieldmarshal von Gablentz had just arrived again, for the purpose of negotiating a truce on the basis of the cession of the Bohemian fortresses proposed by von Moltke.

My astonishment increased, when the Crown Prince related to me very angrily, that he had just told the Austrian General straight out what he thought of Austria's bringing France into our affairs. Seeing that Herr von Gablentz had been despatched to Pardubitz to the Royal head-quarters, I

begged the Crown Prince most urgently, to repair thither immediately in person, in order to counteract any possible impulse to yield on the part of the King. The Crown Prince replied, that he had made a vow on the battle-field of Königgrätz to neglect nothing that in him lay, to ensure the right fruits for Prussia's and Germany's welfare and future accruing from the victory which had been bought with so much blood.

In this very determined mood, the Crown Prince drove at once to Pardubitz; he hoped, in fact, to forestall the Austrian parlamentaire by taking a different road to head-quarters. It may be imagined that my best wishes accompanied him on his journey.

Before the night set in, the Crown Prince returned from Pardubitz, and arrived in Hohenmaut. I had scarcely expected him back so soon. However, I went to him at ten o'clock, and heard with no little pleasure that Gablentz had not even been admitted to the King.

'An insolent victor,' said the Crown Prince, when I entered his room, 'could not have proposed different conditions to his vanquished foe.' However, before Gablentz arrived, so he continued, the King had sent Prince Henry VII of Reuss to Paris, and Herr von Schweinitz to St Petersburg. Owing to the cession of Venetia, and to the news, which had meanwhile arrived, that the Emperor of Austria had given orders to bring the army stationed in Italy to Vienna, the King was out of humour. For the moment, therefore, we could be quite sure that the trap that had been set for the King, would prove harmless. General von Gablentz had been dismissed with a letter from Moltke, which expressed Prussia's readiness to conclude a definite peace. But the King, it went on to say, would never be able to agree to conditions for a truce, such as were contained in Mensdorff's instructions to Gablentz.

Thus the danger of a precipitated truce of arms was happily obviated. From the further accounts of the Crown Prince, I learned that, on his drive back, he had spoken a second time with General von Gablentz in Chrustowitz. He

met him just as he arrived from Pardubitz. Gablentz stopped his carriage, and asked for a few moments' hearing. The Crown Prince stepped aside with the General, and the latter said that he intended to be in Vienna the next afternoon, and hoped soon to obtain peace. In consequence of this, the Crown Prince again adverted to the cession of Venetia to France, of which Gablentz pretended to know nothing. When the Crown Prince remarked: 'Why, Mensdorff is with you in Zwittau, and he must surely know of it,' Gablentz acknowledged that Mensdorff had been there since the 5th, but that he had given him no information.

When I started from Hohenmaut on my way to Leitomischl the next morning, I experienced a very droll scene with my host, who had made every endeavour to provide for my comfort, and who now demanded a written promise from me, that on my return journey, as he expressed it, I would not take up my quarters with anybody but himself. Altogether, in most of the places through which we now passed, a great change in the behaviour of the people was to be perceived. In Leitomischl, where I resided in the house of a country lawyer, the Crown Prince paid me a visit in the evening with Count Eulenburg, whereupon a numerous crowd collected in front of the house, and seemed not at all disinclined to treat us to all kinds of ovations. The next morning, a young doctor, who said he had seen me in former years, when acting as an official on my Upper Austrian estates, requested an audience of me. From this man, too, I learned the strangest things regarding the total change in the feelings of the population.

Rarely has a State been brought so close to the brink of ruin by the loss of a single battle, as Austria was in 1866. If King William had not been by nature a deadly enemy of all illoyal, revolutionary, and unpatriotic feelings, sentiments, such as were contained in Usedom's radical proposals, would have conjured up dangers of no trifling kind. But such ideas were not allowed to be whispered in the presence of the King. Austria has scarcely ever had a more loyal enemy in war, than William I. If the urgings of the Hungarian emigrants

in Silesia were given way to a little in those days, this was a fact which probably never came to the King's knowledge.

Nevertheless, as matters stood, the Emperor of Austria appeared determined to keep up the lost game. The 2nd army was accordingly ordered to enter the Littau-Konitz line, to render the re-establishment of the adversary's army in Olmütz as difficult as possible, and to take up its ground in the county of Glatz. To this end, the 1st army corps had to enter the neighbourhood of Zwittau, and send forward its vanguard on the roads to Brunn and Trübau in Moravia. In case of need, the 5th army corps was to advance as far as Landskron, in order to keep in touch with the enemy, whilst the Guards were sent forward to the left as far as Brandeis.

However, the retreat of the Austrian army to Olmütz took place almost undisturbed. On the 10th of July, the Crown Prince's head-quarters were transferred from Leitomischl to Trübau in Moravia, where the Austrian 2nd army corps was said to have bivouacked the day before.

At three o'clock, we reached the little town, where I took up my quarters in a pleasant house facing the market-place. The King was in Zwittau. We had two days of rest in Trübau, during which numerous bodies of troops marched through, and pushed forward.

On the 11th of July, Field-marshal Wrangel arrived in Trübau at the head of his regiment of Cuirassiers. It would be difficult to conceive a more exalting spectacle, than that of this excellent old hero, who, since his great age prevented him from assuming a post of command in the great war, had not hesitated to don helmet and breast-plate, and share dangers and fatigue with his soldiers. Besides Wrangel's Cuirassiers, other portions of the 1st and 5th army corps passed through the little town on the 12th of July, and defiled before the Crown Prince on the market-place, like in times of peace. All the troops presented an excellent appearance, at which the inhabitants expressed great surprise.

The days of repose in Trübau at last brought me more detailed accounts from home.

The events that had taken place during the last ten days

in Coburg, scarcely produced a serious impression, when contrasted with the bloody and serious experiences at the seat of war in Bohemia. After the battles of Schmalkalden and Dermbach, the Bavarians had retired from the valley of the Werra, occupying Coburg and assuming the administration of the town. As, until the news of the battle of Königgrätz, a good many circles in Coburg had failed to comprehend the action of their Sovereign, they at first got on very well with the Bavarian troops. Nor were the latter disposed to make the kindred population feel the weight of the war. The Bavarians, so my correspondents reported, evinced themselves very grateful for everything that was offered them.

The only person who had to suffer no inconsiderable inconvenience from the Bavarian occupation, was the Duchess, who resided on the Callenberg. It had so happened, that, soon after the battle of Langensalza, a messenger of the Duchess, who was to have conveyed letters to me through the forest, fell into the hands of the Bavarians. He had made use of a good horse from my stud, which became his betrayer. Although my correspondence with the Duchess was of an entirely unwar-like nature, yet the Bavarians fancied they must be prepared for the worst from the Callenberg, during their presence in Coburg. Prince Charles himself wrote a very formal letter to my wife, his cousin, in which he informed her of the necessity of keeping a sharp watch upon her. After this, the residence of the Duchess was actually so strictly surrounded, that she could only take walks in the immediate neighbourhood. Everything that was brought to the Callenberg, was subjected to a rigid examination. Even the movements and proceedings in the castle were anxiously watched, because it was thought that signals and messages might be sent into the country from the battlements of the castle, as in the times of the ancient knights.

When I received these accounts in Trübau, and informed the Crown Prince of the occupation of Coburg by the Bavarians, the telegraphic reports of the bloody battle of Kissingen, and the total retreat of the Bavarian army to Schweinfurt and Würzburg, had already reached the head-

quarters of the King. In consequence of this battle, the 2nd battalion of the 6th regiment of Bavarian infantry, which had occupied Coburg on the 2nd of July, had evacuated the town again on the 6th of July. However, before the departing battalion had reached Lichtenfels, it received counter-orders, and turned back again, in order to re-enter Coburg. Both its departure and re-entry, as I was subsequently assured, took place in an extremely easy-going fashion, the soldiers and the inhabitants of the town having taken cordial leave of one another in an abundant supply of the Coburg 'brown moist,' only to celebrate the joy of meeting again a few hours afterwards. However, the pleasant occupation of the little country cost the Coburg State Treasury a considerable sum, for the requisitions attained the amount of 50,000 florins.

After the days of rest in Trübau, the second army was ordered to proceed by rapid marches to Olmütz. On the 13th of July, the head-quarters of the Crown Prince were in Oppatowitz, and on the 14th in Konitz. In the former town, one or two incidents occurred which reminded me for the first time more distinctly that we were in the enemy's country. We had hitherto been accustomed, when entering our quarters, to be received very kindly, sometimes, indeed, almost too enthusiastically, by our hosts. In Oppatowitz, however, we were confronted with anxiety, fear, and dark looks, on the part of the inhabitants. The Crown Prince with his Staff had taken up his abode in the castle of Count Heberstein, which contained a great many rooms provided with every comfort. Also the parsonage, where I was quartered with my suite, presented outwardly a stately appearance. In the interior, however, there was little order, and it gave one the impression as though most of the household effects had been cleared out. On my arrival, the housekeeper threw herself at my feet crying, and stammered in broken German all sorts of things about the danger of an expected battle or surprise. The parson, she said, had therefore only kept in the house what was absolutely necessary. Whilst I was dining in the garden at five o'clock, I was informed that a travelling carriage had

been found concealed near by, and that two strangers were in the house, one of whom was represented by the parson to be a pensioned official, who belonged to his household, and was a friend of his, whilst the other was said to be a guest who had arrived from Trübau the previous day. The latter had at once attracted the attention of my servants by his inquisitive questions about persons and things. He wanted to know what kind of horse the Crown Prince rode, by what he could be recognised, and whether the King was also coming to Oppatowitz. All these circumstances rendered it advisable to have the two friends of the parson examined at head-quarters, and to adopt other precautionary measures.

My people stayed up in the parsonage, and, in the evening, when I visited the Crown Prince in the castle of Heberstein, I made the suggestion that the very woody, and in military respects unsecured, surroundings of the place should be guarded by sentinels. As we subsequently ascertained, a few noblemen in the northern parts of Moravia, acting in concert with some officer or other of the Austrian army, had at that time really made attempts to form volunteer corps, with the view of impeding our advance. In fact, one of these personages, a certain Captain von Vivenot, who was known in the military literature of those days in Austria, was being vigorously searched for by our Gendarmerie. I have no doubt that the suspicious people in the parsonage of Oppatowitz belonged to those agents who made the foolish attempt in northern Moravia to organise a system of volunteer-corps, in order eventually to threaten our lines of retreat into the county of Glatz.

Meanwhile, since the 14th and 15th of July, on which days we were stationed with head-quarters in Konitz, a few events of greater military importance had taken place again.

Although the vanguard of the second army had arrived in the immediate vicinity of the extensive fortifications of Olmütz, its separate divisions still stood at great distances from one another, so that the position would not have been devoid of danger, had the enemy really gathered his forces under the protection of the forts, and re-formed his ranks.

The fifth corps was stationed in Jaromierschitz, Gewitsch, and Konitz, but the corps of the Guards was still in Trübau and Turnau, whilst the 6th corps was even far behind in Bohemia, and was keeping a day of rest in Landskron.

The vanguard of the first corps had been sent on to Hrochow on the 13th of July, and on the 14th to Prossnitz. In spite of this, total uncertainty reigned as to the intentions of the enemy, with whom all touch had been lost. It gained more and more the appearance, as if the Master of the Ordnance Benedek did not intend to collect his army in Olmütz, but was bent on gaining possession of the Railway Prerau-Lundenburg-Vienna, in order to concentrate all the troops that were still left, on the Danube.

Directly after the cession of Venetia, the Emperor of Austria had ordered his southern army back from Italy to Vienna, and had appointed Archduke Albrecht commander-in-chief of all the army corps. Nothing, therefore, was more natural, than that, also of the northern army, as many troops as possible should be ordered into the plains of the March, in order to face us in another great battle. Unfortunately, we were late in recognising the correctness of this combination. On the 14th of July, however, Lieutenant von Witzingerode, while out reconnoitring, had ridden close up to the forts of Olmütz without receiving a single shot. In fact, he was quietly able to observe, that considerable columns were marching from the fortress towards the South. General von Bonin accordingly received instructions to proceed on a reconnoitring expedition to Tobitschau, south of Olmütz, whilst General von Hartmann was to advance as far as Prerau, and destroy the railway. At noon on the 14th of July, General von Hartmann reported to the Commander of the 5th army corps, that all observations tended to show that the enemy was about to march back to the south.

In the evening of the same day, the Crown Prince had ridden in person to the Commander of the 5th army corps, to bring him the Order of the Black Eagle for the battles of Nachod and Skalitz. On this occasion, he met General von Hartmann in Neustift, and instructed him to deliver General

von Bonin the order to send a brigade of infantry with a battery of guns to Tobitschau the next day. This brigade was to occupy the passes between Tobitschau and Traubeck, in order to support an expedition of the combined cavalry division against Prerau, which was to be carried out early on the 15th, and, if necessary, to secure the retreat of the cavalry.

Immediately before, an encounter had taken place near Kralitz between the second squadron of the 1st regiment of Prussian Hussars under Captain von Winterfeldt, and a squadron-and-a-half of the 3rd regiment of Saxon troopers. News of the reconnoitring expedition was anxiously expected at head-quarters on the 15th of July. In the morning, the Crown Prince called upon me at my quarters, where we held a long council with the officers of the General Staff, and considered what our position would be, in the event of the decisive battle taking place before Vienna.

A fact which weighed upon the Crown Prince's mind, was the observation he had made, that there were whole companies in his own army, who were not aware that he had led the troops at Chlum. The idea, therefore, easily suggested itself, that, perhaps in wider circles, too, the merits of the second army had not been fully appreciated. If, then, the supposition proved correct, that the enemy was about to entirely evacuate his position in Olmütz, the second army would in a measure be condemned to remain inactive for the rest of the campaign.

The latter circumstance caused General von Blumenthal to take serious account of this very unfavourable situation, and I went with him to the Crown Prince, in order to induce him to make representations on the subject to the King and General von Moltke. The Crown Prince agreed to this, and sent General von Blumenthal himself to Moltke, and Major Mischke to the King, who had established his head-quarters in Brünn. In consequence, the order came from the General Staff, consenting that only one brigade should be left behind to guard the fortress of Olmütz, whilst the whole of the second army was allowed to leave for the south.

Meanwhile, in the afternoon of the 15th of July, the first

accounts arrived of the brilliant battle which General von Bonin had been fighting in Tobitschau since nine o'clock in the morning. At three o'clock, General von Hartmann met near Rokeinitz with the marching columns of the first Austrian corps, which were completely routed. As had been correctly assumed, the chief force of the northern army had already escaped by way of Kremsier, leaving only small portions of two Austrian army corps to be driven back by the successful reconnoitring expedition of Generals von Bonin and von Hartmann.

Under these circumstances, it of course appeared highly important to alter the route of the second army. On the 15th of July, the corps of the Guards was ordered to Boskowitz, and the 6th corps to Lettowitz. The Crown Prince's suite took the road to Brünn, and proceeded on the 16th of July *via* Prossnitz to Prödlitz. In the hospital in Prossnitz, which was full of wounded soldiers, we found, besides the Prussian officers and soldiers who had taken part in the battle of the previous day, a great many Saxon comrades, who were all in need of our sympathy.

At noon, General von Steinmetz entered Prossnitz at the head of two divisions. The Crown Prince issued orders for the troops to defile before him, which gave rise to one of the finest unprepared parades ever seen in the field. The men bore an excellent appearance, the 7th regiment of the Royal Grenadiers, in particular, making a great impression. One or two pensioned Austrian officers of high rank, whom I recognised among the public, were full of admiration at the bearing of these troops.

In the noon-day heat, it seemed scarcely possible to reach the head-quarters in Prödlitz, and we could hardly get our tired horses to move along. In the castle of Prödlitz, where the Crown Prince took up his quarters, a steward who had remained behind, did the honours, whilst I and my suite were very kindly received by the miller and the parish doctor. The Crown Prince told us, amid great mirth, that he felt himself all the more secure in his castle, as he had been placed under the protection of an unusual quantity of saints' images

and votive tablets, and had been provided with a choice of every species of rosary in his bed-room.

During my presence on the 16th and 17th of July, fresh troops of Austrian prisoners were constantly being conveyed through Prödlitz. On the 18th of July, I started off in the fearful heat of the forenoon, and rode over Wischau and Rausnitz along the highway from Olmütz to Brünn. On the way, a violent storm broke loose, which compelled me to halt in Rausnitz, where I joined company again with the officers of the Crown Prince's suite. Before evening, we entered the capital of the country, where we were received by a crowd of people who accompanied us to the chief square. I received my quarters in the house of Count Mittrowski, but, as my people had not yet arrived, I dined at an hotel near by. In the morning, as the Crown Prince told me, a letter had arrived from Bismarck, requesting the Crown Prince's presence in Brünn as speedily as possible. However, before he arrived, the King and his whole staff had already left for Nikolsburg.

Rumours and surmises of every description now arose. Benedetti was in Brünn, and had repaired to Nikolsburg, when the King's head-quarters were transferred to that town. M. Lefebvre of the French Embassy in Berlin had reached the Prussian outposts with proposals for a truce, and Prince Reuss VII had arrived at the head-quarters of the King on his return from Paris. When I visited the Crown Prince in the forenoon of the 19th of July, I found him not a little uneasy at not having received the slightest further information concerning the situation. Those who were initiated in politics, were gradually seized by a kind of foreboding that internal and external circumstances might easily combine to reduce the prize of our victories and sacrifices far below the level of our justified expectations.

'There is truce in the air,' said the Crown Prince, when I arrived on the 19th of July, after a sharp ride of four hours from Brünn, in Gross-Seelowitz, where he had been expecting me for dinner.

In the company which remained together at the Crown Prince's until late that evening, politics were a good deal

discussed, and everybody indulged in conjectures as to the intervention of France and the concessions that might be expected from Austria, if the truce were concluded. In the night, the news at last arrived, that Austria had agreed to secede from the German Confederation. It was the first real concession that was made by our adversary, but even this was not of a kind to afford us the certain hope of obtaining free scope of action in Germany. To all appearances, Austria's concession, in its purely negative form, was one made rather to the ideas of Napoleon, than to the wishes and interests of Germany. For, that the Emperor of the French did not intend a reform of Germany as a whole under Prussia's supremacy, this I was easily able to gather from the views which he had at various times expressed to me before the war.

In this doubtful mood, the Crown Prince went the next morning from Gross-Seelowitz to Nikolsburg to the King, and I soon followed him in a hackney carriage with my aid-de-camp. At the Royal table at noon, the following version was current as to the concessions made by Austria: 'Austria agrees to pay us contributions. She agrees, furthermore, to the founding of a North German Confederation extending as far as the Main, under the military supremacy of Prussia; and finally, to the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein.' Besides this, it was declared that a truce was to be concluded subject to short notice, and that the preliminary negotiations for peace were to begin immediately. The French Ambassador Benedetti and the Italian Ambassador Count Barral were present at the Royal dinner.

In the evening, I drove with the Crown Prince direct to Eisgrub, where the head-quarters had meanwhile been established, and where I found abundant room for myself and my people in the castle of Prince Liechtenstein.

Austria's situation was obviously a difficult one. Though they pretended on the Danube, that they were about to prepare for a final battle, this could not be regarded as likely, in spite of the arrival of the southern army and the Archduke Albrecht's assumption of the chief command.

Besides, a rising was preparing in Hungary, and the

legion of General Klapka was only awaiting orders. General Cialdini was now advancing from Italy, and his army evinced very little inclination to halt on the Tagliamento. South Tyrol was for the most part in Garibaldi's hands, and, in the old German hereditary countries, there was no mistaking the existence of a certain exhaustion, which appeared in connection with a strong feeling of political dissatisfaction. In spite of all this, there was not the slightest doubt among all thinking politicians, in Nikolsburg as well as in Eisgrub, that it was by no means expedient to deprive the Austrian State of the primary conditions of life. The chief question and the chief difficulty was only, whether it would be possible to allow Austria to plead for her German allies, supposing she felt herself called upon, either directly, or through Napoleon's intermediation, to exercise any influence on the shaping of German territorial and constitutional questions. King William was disposed to treat those German Sovereigns who had risen in opposition against him, with extraordinary mildness. As victor, he felt himself in a manner doubly bound, not only to show the utmost respect for all sovereign rights, but actually to protect them. In those days, one had sometimes the feeling, as if there could be a magnanimity which estimates the hard necessity of events at too low a price.

During the days of repose in Nikolsburg, there were but few peaceful hours allotted to Count Bismarck. His services, just in times when he had to work hardest, are perhaps least known. How these momentous and difficult negotiations in Nikolsburg were really mastered, is a question which has hitherto scarcely been quite cleared up, nor is it exactly my task to be the first to do this in a manner satisfactory to all parties.

In my opinion, the comparatively favourable results were the product of the energetic and satisfactory co-operation of the Crown Prince with Count Bismarck. What I, for my humble part, could contribute, by counsel and sympathy, towards bringing matters into the right groove, was in so far not quite useless, as my perfectly objective opinion as to

what changes in the States would be absolutely necessary in the interest of Prussia as leading Power in Germany, could not be doubted by anybody, and therefore possessed a certain value in the eyes of the King himself.

All questions of this kind were by no means yet settled, when Count Karolyi, the last Ambassador in Berlin, arrived at head-quarters on the 23rd of July, with Lieutenant Field-marshal Count Degenfeld, and accompanied by Baron Brenner and Count Kuefstein, to negotiate the preliminaries of peace.

The truce had commenced on a Sunday, and came to an end on Friday at 12 o'clock. On Monday the 23rd of July, the Crown Prince had gone to Nikolsburg. On his return in the evening, he remarked that Saxony's position, which Austria made it a point of honour to consider, though without danger for the moment, might easily cause subsequent complications, if Saxony, based on France's support, were to refuse to accept the new Federal relations. Moreover, the Crown Prince regarded it as an unfavourable symptom for the prospects of peace, that Austria had expressly insisted on waiting for the arrival of a Bavarian negotiator, because a league offensive and defensive existed between the two States.

On Tuesday morning (July 24), I drove with the Crown Prince to the King in Nikolsburg. Without our having suspected or intended it, this day was to become one of the most important ones in the development and reform of affairs in Germany. The negotiations for peace had now entered a stage, in which not only the fate of Prussia's German adversaries had to be decided, but certainty obtained as to the attitude of France towards the matters in question.

The King was somewhat ailing. The evening before, he had had a slight attack of the illness which was spreading more and more among our ranks. But he would not allow this to prevent him from pursuing his usual occupations and habits without interruption.

In the castle, I met Count Bismarck, who at once drew me into an elaborate conversation. He was in a very serious frame of mind, and deplored the enormous difficulties that were being heaped up. The moment had come, when a

decision had at last to be arrived at with regard to the territories occupied by Prussia. The former utterance of the President of the Ministry respecting Prussia's slender body had now become an acute political question, and he was impressed with the fact that at this moment only a resolute word of the King could solve and determine it. Under these circumstances, the Minister was well justified in listening to the opinion of a German Sovereign, who had stood true to Prussia in battle, and who simply gave expression to his moral convictions, insignificant though his position might be from the standpoint of actual proportions of power.

There was not the slightest doubt in my mind, that, after these tremendous military achievements, posterity would only term it weakness, if the consequences of the stupendous facts that had been created, were not really drawn. Nor could the idea of Germany be politically realised, unless those dynasties which were an insuperable hindrance to all progressive development of the Empire, vanished from the surface of the Federal State that was now to be newly founded. If the most eminent statesman of the century was apparently prevented, at a critical moment, from crossing the threshold, as it were, of an open door, he could be sure of possessing my entire sympathy.

I recommended Count Bismarck to come to an understanding with the Crown Prince, and prevail upon him to make use of his privilege as successor to the throne, in order to induce the King to take the resolutions which he found it so hard to contemplate. We succeeded accordingly in determining the Crown Prince to discuss the annexation questions unreservedly with the King.

I still see the Crown Prince entering hesitatingly and timidly into the King's apartments. Count Bismarck and I meanwhile awaited the result in the ante-chamber, and I distinctly recollect how slowly these weighty moments seemed to pass.

At last the Crown Prince appeared again. He returned like one exhausted, but he was able to assure us that the King had yielded on the chief points at issue. As is well-

known, Count Bismarck, in negotiating peace, was now in the position to claim for his victorious King an increase of three million inhabitants within the sphere of Prussia's power. The countries he had in view, were not expressly indicated, but were of course tacitly understood.

After the conversations which I had in the castle, I went, with Count Bismarck's consent, to the Austrian Plenipotentiary Count Degenfeld, and the French Ambassador Benedetti. It was perhaps desirable that a person of sovereign rank, who was not immediately concerned, should interchange opinions on the situation with the two negotiators for peace. I was better qualified to do so than any one else, as I could base my arguments with Count Benedetti on the fact that I knew the true opinion of Louis Napoleon. I could appeal to the sacred assurances which the Emperor had positively given me, that he neither would nor could interfere in German affairs, and to his frequent statement that nothing was farther from his mind than to oppose the expressed requirements of our nation. I also remarked, that the Emperor would now have full opportunity to prove how far his assurances that he intended to live in peace with us, had been seriously meant. By my references to the conversations which the Emperor had held with me in the course of the last twelve years, I succeeded in somewhat surprising the French mediator of peace.

From my conversations with Count Degenfeld, in whom I found an old acquaintance, I gathered that Austria herself was suffering only too keenly from the French mediation which she had appealed to. Louis Napoleon, in fact, only showed himself generous in the form of his intervention. In the matter itself, however, he gave signs of no very kindly disposition towards the State on the Danube. Matters being in this position, it was particularly irksome for the Austrian negotiator, as Count Degenfeld remarked, that, by the cession of Venice to Louis Napoleon, treating diplomacy had really been deprived of the sole object for which return services could be demanded. The Austrian plenipotentiaries, therefore, were almost in a less favourable position towards Benedetti,

than towards Prussia, and, as Russia had by this time refused all support to Austrian policy, they saw themselves unable to procure for their German allies such advantages, as they at heart desired for them.

When the Crown Prince returned from Nikolsburg to Eisgrub in the evening of the 25th, he was able to give me the agreeable information, that, generally speaking, the principle of an increase of three million inhabitants for Prussia might be regarded as conceded.

If, on the other hand, Prussia promised to renounce claim to the Danish districts in Schleswig-Holstein, this was essentially out of consideration for France, and could be the more approved, as Napoleon—(the reader will recollect my conversations with him in the spring of 1864)—was sure to be personally gratified that an idea urged by him, and still advocated in the discussion of the Schleswig-Holstein question at the London Conference, was not rejected.

In these deliberations and negotiations, the five days' truce quickly passed. On Thursday the 26th of July, I was visited by General von Steinmetz, whom the Crown Prince had invited to dinner, where we all remained together until late in the evening. We were anxiously awaiting news from Nikolsburg. At last a telegram came, saying that the negotiations were concluded, and that the preliminaries of peace had been signed, and only required the ratification of the monarchs. On Saturday the 28th of July, the documents of ratification were exchanged.

On Sunday the 29th, I went to Nikolsburg at 6 o'clock in the morning to take leave of the King. When I entered his room, he advanced to meet me with particular cordiality, and thanked me for the services I had rendered in the campaign from the first moment of the outbreak of the war. 'Your resolute siding with our cause,' he said, 'relieved me at the decisive moment from the oppressing feeling that I stood alone and isolated among the German Sovereigns. I shall never forget that. Meanwhile, I still owe you the thanks of your military chief.' Saying these words, he handed me, to my great surprise, the military insignia of the Order of the Red

Eagle, (the little cross with swords on a black and white ribbon).

We were both greatly moved, and I know that I was only able to give a very imperfect expression to my feelings for the King, with whom an identity of aims had united me for twenty years, and with whom I had personally not been at variance for one moment, though our ways and views of the world were often very different.

When I was about to take leave of Count Bismarck, I was astonished to hear that, even at this stage of the negotiations for peace, the difficulties, especially with regard to Hanover and Hesse, had not yet been all removed. I therefore proposed that the Count should drive with me to Eisgrub to see the Crown Prince. Count Bismarck gladly accepted my proposal, and at half-past twelve o'clock we again arrived at the Castle of Liechtenstein.

Count Bismarck left us after breakfast, and returned to Nikolsburg. The Crown Prince promised to follow him thither the next day, and I had afterwards occasion to learn that also this last intervention of the Crown Prince in respect of the settlement of the annexation questions proved an extremely fortunate and successful one, so that the King's message of incorporation could be submitted to the two houses of the Diet on the 17th of August.

Meanwhile, the day of my departure, Monday the 30th of July, had approached. In consequence of what had been arranged on the previous day, the Crown Prince drove early in the morning with Count Bismarck to the King, leaving me his own carriage to convey me to Lundenburg. We took cordial leave of each other, conscious that we had passed through one of the most decisive moments in the shaping of Germany's destiny in ever memorable fellowship.

Late in the evening of the 1st of August, I reached Gotha. Both there and in Coburg, I had deprecated any formal reception. On the 5th of August, I hastened to Coburg, leaving the train in Eisfeld, and driving from there with my horses to the Rosenau, where I met the Duchess.

Six grave and eventful weeks had elapsed, since I left Coburg.

CHAPTER XII

THE NORTH GERMAN CONFEDERATION AND ITS RESULTS.—FRENCH POLICY.—INFLUENCE OF THE EMPRESS EUGENIE.—THE FRENCH EXHIBITION IN 1867.—THE DUKE IN PARIS — THE MEXICAN TRAGEDY.—RESENTMENT AGAINST THE PRUSSIANS IN FRANCE.—THE HOHENZOLLERN CANDIDATURE FOR THE SPANISH THRONE.—THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR OF 1870.—ENTHUSIASM IN GERMANY.—THE BATTLES OF WEISSENBURG AND WÖRTH.—THE VICTORIES OF METZ.—THE BATTLE OF SEDAN.—LOUIS NAPOLEON'S HISTORICAL LETTER TO KING WILLIAM.—THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE MONARCHS AT THE CHATEAU BELLEVUE.—THE CAPITULATION OF SEDAN.—FROM SEDAN TO PARIS.—IN VERSAILLES.—MEETING AND CONVERSATION WITH THIERS. — THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE.—CONCLUSION.

It would be a sign of no very profound and statesmanlike intelligence, were any one to boast that he were able to describe the events of the last twenty years with the same freedom from bias, with which I think I may credit the preceding pages of my book. My communications would call forth very different discussions and comments on the part of the political literature of the day, than the description of those earlier facts, which are now accomplished and done with, because the greater part of what is now in question, still belongs, as it were, to the daily bread of political life.

What I am still able to communicate to the kind reader, who has given me his attention throughout so many chapters, can only be termed a formal conclusion to contemporary German history. If my descriptions have hitherto led me to all kinds of European States and Courts, and into the most distant countries and towns, and if I was not unfrequently enabled to speak as a witness of facts which are little known,

and to communicate important utterances of influential personages, my intention in the following pages is merely to complete the *curriculum vitæ* of the narrator, in order not to let the long thread seem suddenly cut asunder, before the Fates have raised their hands to do so.

What was our position, when the North German Confederation was founded?

Foes and evil-wishers appeared to be rising up against us on all sides, and yet the proof was immediately given, that the new Confederation could employ a very different language from that which, since immemorial times, the world had been accustomed to hear from Germany. Whilst the Reichstag, which gave the Constitution its final shape, was still assembled in Berlin, we were confronted by the danger of a war threatening us from France. But the revenge for Sadowa demanded in the neighbouring State, was rejected with so much firmness and unanimity, that Napoleon abstained, in alarm, from making any claim to compensations.

The Luxembourg question cropped up as unexpectedly as it was speedily and resolutely settled. However, it afforded an opportunity of manifesting the league offensive and defensive which had been concluded with the South German Governments, and of thereby striking the first effective blow at Imperialism, so that the presentiment began to dawn in France that its star was on the eve of setting.

If the noisy demonstrations of Bavarian ultramontanes against Prussia, or the agitation of the Welfs in Hanover, still enabled a few Frenchmen to indulge in sweet delusions, and to count upon inner animosities and revolutionary risings in Germany, I do not believe that Napoleon himself for one instant underrated the newly awakened sentiment of German nationality. I had too often heard him speak on this subject, and could therefore never regard his position otherwise than that of one caught in his own net. His policy during the three years preceding the outbreak of the war gave me the impression of a ship that had lost its helm. The sails by which it was driven forward, had been swelled by winds over which the Emperor possessed no power, Since Königgrätz,

he had incessantly pursued the idea that some compensation must fall into his lap. He considered it an absolute necessity that some equivalent, were it the very smallest, should be offered to his Frenchmen, if the unreasonable cry for revenge was to be silenced. But, in this endeavour, he gave one rather the impression of an ever calculating merchant, than of a brave military leader.

The German Government was cautious enough, in the form of its refusals, not to injure the dignity and the political honour of the Emperor in any way. But, as his trafficking could have no success, the war-party which extended over France, steadily gained ground. Where the threads of this party were spun, and where they met, has as yet scarcely been quite cleared up. But it is well-known, that an active circle had gathered round the Empress, which pursued quite independent paths, and managed the policy of the Empire on its own account.

In the summer of 1867, we had every reason to be satisfied that the constitution of the Confederation had been brought under shelter at all, and that peace was secured for the present. Napoleon, too, consoled himself and his people with a brilliant International Exhibition, which gave the rulers of Europe an opportunity of visiting Paris and re-mending the prestige of the Empire, which had been somewhat damaged in the eyes of the French by Sadowa and Mexico.

After the adjustment of the Luxembourg dispute, King William hastened to give expression to his peaceable and friendly sentiments by appearing in the Tuileries on the 6th of June, attended by Count Bismarck. The Emperor of Russia had arrived a few days before, and the official and semi-official newspapers had all kinds of satisfactory things to tell of the cordial understanding which prevailed between these mighty rulers. The wicked, but happily unsuccessful, attempt of a Pole, who fired his revolver at the Emperor of Russia, while he was driving home with Napoleon after a review of the troops, was unfortunately little calculated at the time to increase the sympathy of Russia for France.

Soon after the visits of the sovereigns of Russia and

Prussia, I myself arrived in Paris to see the Great Exhibition, and stayed there from the middle to the end of June. When it is remembered, that at this moment everybody's attention was anxiously directed to the tragedy now drawing to a close in Mexico, it will easily be conceived what interest it afforded me to inform myself personally as to the position of affairs.

When I met the Emperor, we were both involuntarily reminded of the curious coincidence, that I had been a witness of the parting visit of the Emperor Maximilian and my cousin Charlotte in the Tuileries. And now, when news of the most terrible description was to be expected from one moment to the next, I again stood before the mighty ruler, who, at this fatal collapse of his transatlantic creation, must have been sensible of his weakness, both as a politician and as a man.

In these hours of anxious suspense, all other political affairs became of secondary importance. I conversed with General Bazaine, who had returned from Mexico. He gave me the impression of a messenger of ill-omen, who, by what he already knew, had completely hardened himself against anything that might still ensue. As for the Emperor, he seemed desirous of exculpating himself by all kinds of references to the conversations he had formerly held with me. He gave himself the appearance as if the matter concerned him less politically than sentimentally. The deed committed at Queretaro on the 19th of June was concealed from the European public for a few days. It was not until the 3rd of July, that the telegraph spread the official news of the death of the unhappy Emperor Max through the world. Outside the closer family circle, there was scarcely any mention as yet of the fate of the Empress Charlotte. But her life, almost more than the death of her husband, cast an impenetrable shadow upon the French Imperial couple. I took leave of Napoleon, as from a sick man who was with difficulty holding himself erect under overwhelming blows, and, when I saw him again, he was himself a prisoner of the German army on the day after Sedan.

The momentary rejoicings during the exhibition of Paris

could not deceive the unbiassed observer, on the whole, as to the serious resentment of the population against the *Prussiens*, whom the French very inventively distinguished from the Germans. These passions were nourished by a war-like party outside France, and were increased more and more by the anti-Napoleonic opposition in France. Thiers, and those who thought as he did, never grew tired of representing the bogy of German unity to the French in the most terrifying form possible, and reproaching the Government for not having managed to avert this danger. I could easily convince myself, that the Emperor himself in a certain sense shared the black views of M. Thiers and his comrades, but that the Government, under the shield of a French-Austrian-Catholic-Bavarian-Welfish alliance, which was said to be expected, was merely endeavouring to dispel the ill-humour of the ambitious nation.

After the formation of the Ollivier Ministry on the 2nd of January, 1870, Napoleon thought he could divert the French from foreign affairs by the enticing prospect of a more parliamentary government. To this came the fact, that the party which was most clamorous for war, was apparently fully taken up with the approaching *Concilium Vaticanum*, and the preparations for extraordinary decisions respecting the position of the Pope in the Catholic Church. Since the fall of Queen Isabella's government in Spain, the course of events there was regarded in Germany almost exclusively with the eyes of a lover's policy, which was capable of growing enthusiastic for the idealism of Emilio Castelar. Hence, when the Hohenzollern candidature sprung up, I also belonged to those who did not think it likely that any immediate danger of war could arise from it. For such a danger to have been credible to anyone who was acquainted with the Emperor of the French as I was, he must have known what I only ascertained later on, that the Emperor was in a far worse state of health than the world assumed, and, in consequence, much less able to offer resistance to those who surrounded him, than had formerly been the case. The manner in which he was driven into the war, still gives me the impression of a perfect

martyrium, a tragedy, in which the hero acts a purely passive part.

I own that I so little dreamt of any immediate danger of war at that moment, that I went to the Tyrol on the 23rd of June, and, on the 10th of July, travelled *via* Verona and Venice to Abbazia, where I intended to stay for some time, in order to recruit my health by taking the sea-baths in that glorious, and until then scarcely explored, corner of the Adriatic. I had just arrived at the beautiful villa of M. de Scarpa, where I was going to reside, when the first news of the events in Berlin and Ems reached me. On the 16th of July, I received the decisive war despatches, which determined me to leave my idyll at twelve o'clock at night, and travel through to Coburg, where I arrived in the morning of the 18th. I ordered my aid-de-camp von Schrabisch, who was awaiting me at the station, to proceed at once to Berlin, and I followed him thither on the 21st of July.

However, I must not yield to the temptation of describing the great moments of this unique time in detail. How changed I found my Germany. From Passau to Coburg, Gotha and Berlin, one animated movement of the highest patriotic enthusiasm; everywhere, at every railway station, hundreds of militia men, who were flocking to their flags; and, alternating with tearful scenes of leave-taking, loud hurrahs for Fatherland and King, sent forth by brave hearts. Thus I arrived in Berlin, and thus, on the 22nd, I met the King, the Crown Prince, Bismarck, Moltke, Roon, all united in one great, earnest spirit, strong in their feeling of right, exalted in their consciousness of duty, and enthusiastically resolved, in union with hundreds of thousands, to stake their lives for their country's honour.

His Majesty, flatteringly acknowledging that I had acquired his high satisfaction in the same position in 1866, attached me to the Crown Prince, on whom the command of the 3rd army had been bestowed.

I left Coburg with my two aids-de-camp, Major von Schrabisch, and Lieutenant von Ziegesar, late in the evening of the 28th of July, joined the commander-in-chief of the

head-quarters of the 3rd army, who was coming from Berlin, in Eisenach, reached Speier on the 30th of July, and reported myself the same evening to the Crown Prince.

When we left Speier on the 3rd of August, we scarcely thought that we were on the eve of decisive days of battle. On the 4th of August, at half-past four, when I went to Landau to the Crown Prince's head-quarters, and drove from there with the Crown Prince to Bergzabern, where we mounted horse, the battle for the famous old Weissenburg lines was already raging. We joined the advancing troops; larger and larger masses became involved in the battle, and, after the Gaisberg had been taken by storm, we heard our troops for the first time send up the loud shout of victory, which, in the course of successes unheard of in military history, was never to fail us again.

Three days afterwards, in reporting to the Duchess, to whom I henceforward sent regular accounts, I was able to begin with the joyful words: 'Another bloody battle, as the telegraph has informed you, brilliant and victorious.' I had to tell of the battle of Wörth, which developed out of a skirmish between out-posts on the 6th of August, whilst the intention had been to grant the troops half a day's rest. However, early in the morning, the collision had attained such considerable dimensions, that we started from our quarters in Sulz on the forest, the Crown Prince himself giving orders to bring up all the corps concerned and let them take part in the action.

The joy at the victory of Wörth was enhanced by the tidings that the army of Prince Frederick Charles had gained a brilliant victory on the same day. In communicating this to the Duchess, I had unfortunately to add: 'There is a rumour, that Reuter has been wounded in the battle.'

On the 11th of August, we crossed the Vosges. From the small fortresses of the old girdle, with which Vauban encircled the conquests of Louis XIV, the useless roar of cannon became audible, as we marched along. On the 17th of August, the head-quarters were in Nancy. The Crown Prince had information that in those days the great die was falling before

Metz. When we at last received detailed reports of the tremendous events that had occurred there, we were stationed from the 20th to 23rd of August in the birth-place of the Maid of Orleans, and drank in Vaucouleurs to the victories of Metz.

In the uncertainty of the next ten days, during which the trace of the enemy for some time mysteriously disappeared, we were obliged to accomplish the most fatiguing marches that military history perhaps records. At last, news arrived of the enemy's departure in a north-eastern direction.

We were now left no repose. The great wheel-about was at once executed, which at last brought us up with the entire army of MacMahon. It was on full march, as there was only one railway at its disposal to convey relief to Metz. On the 30th of August, the enemy had taken up a strong position beyond the Forest of Argonnes. Our artillery, supported by our entire cavalry, opened fire, which lasted the whole day, until darkness set in, when the enemy departed.

During the whole of the next day, our troops were rapidly advancing towards the north-east. In the evening, I visited my 95th regiment, which was camping near Chémery. The late moon still shone in the sky, as we rode before four o'clock far beyond our outposts to the heights of Freynoy, which surround the valley of the Maas. A dense mist covered the ground below and the fortress of Sedan, which lay in front of us, and was recognisable by its projecting steeples. Gradually, as the orb of day rose blood-red, the scenery unfolded before our eyes.

Every minute the battle might be opened. In silent expectation we gazed at the slowly advancing hand of the clock. When it reached a quarter to seven, the thunder of over a hundred cannon roared forth simultaneously. In the fore- and afternoon, our army corps deployed according to the arrangements made beforehand, and took part in the action, as in a manœuvre in times of peace.

Late in the afternoon, when Sedan, after a long struggle, was encircled, and the roar of the cannon diminished, we hastened with the Crown Prince to the spot where the King

had witnessed the whole action, in order to receive further orders. We just arrived, as the King gave orders that the Würtemberg artillery, which stood in reserve, was to direct its fire at the town.

At this moment, the parlamentaire appeared, who brought the famous historical letter from Napoleon III. I will only briefly recount the often described and ever memorable scene, how the King, after breaking open the letter and glancing into it, said with deep emotion to us who stood close around him: 'Listen.' He then read its moving contents aloud. Sitting upon a plough, he wrote his answer on the back of the aid-de-camp. Deeply moved, and with tears in our eyes, we congratulated our military chief, whereupon we witnessed a spectacle of the most remarkable description. All of a sudden, from more than a hundred thousand throats, a never-ending hurrah burst forth from all the lines, and when the night set in, enormous columns of fire rose up from all the hills, like an illumination improvised by the victorious troops.

Thus the day ended. The 2nd of September brought a new series of tremendous events, which, though unbloody, were of a no less affecting kind for those who were immediate witnesses of them. Meanwhile, we of the third army had received the King's commands to accompany him to the little chateau of Bellevue, to witness his meeting with the Emperor of the French. We arrived at the chateau at 8 o'clock, when the conversation, so often described, and well-known from innumerable pictures, took place. I saw the Emperor, with the tears streaming down his cheeks, and incapable of speaking a word, standing at the entrance. Whilst the monarchs and the Crown Prince went into the house, we others approached the French officers who had come in the suite of the Emperor, and were standing on the little gravel space in front of the chateau.

These gentlemen received us with a certain cordiality, and discussed the events of the previous day with great freedom. After a short stay, we all quitted the sad place with the King, and followed the aged monarch, as fast as our horses could carry us, to the height from which the Crown Prince

had directed the action of his army the day before. At last, General von Moltke appeared, sprung from his horse, and delivered the document of capitulation, whereupon the King, without much hesitation, called with a loud voice: 'The Generals!'

We had scarcely surrounded His Majesty, when, addressing us in an effective speech, he cast a retrospective glance at the events of the war, and concluded as nearly as possible with the following words: 'I thank you all for your courage and your perseverance, and rely upon you in whatever may be further decreed in the Book of Fate.'

The same day, I was destined to meet the Emperor Napoleon as he was driving in an open carriage along the road from Donchery. The troops that were marching past, had caused a block. The carriage of the Emperor was brought to a standstill, so that I was able to make myself perceived, and to bow to him from my horse. He waved his hand in a friendly way, but did not speak a word. For the last time in this life, I saw his sad and overshadowed features.

The next day, we rode with the King and the Crown Prince over the extensive battle-field. But I will let the curtain drop on the terrible pictures of destruction and human misery, which were here unfolded to us.

From Sedan to Paris, our march lasted nearly three weeks. But, on the 30th of September, I was at last able to inform the Duchess that, after the bloody battle of the 19th of September, the capital of France had been surrounded by the German army, and that we had encircled the south-western part with five corps, and established our head-quarters in Versailles.

Nevertheless, so long as the negotiations for the capitulation of Metz led to no result, we were not free from anxiety. The baggage was often packed, and the horses saddled in Versailles, because the reorganisation of the French armies in the north and the west made our position in Versailles gradually appear precarious. However, after Metz had fallen on the 26th of October, the issue of the war could no longer be doubtful.

As to the political circumstances, we in Versailles indulged for some time in the fond hope that the more prudent elements of the Paris Republican Government, with their good intentions of establishing a speedy peace, would after all gain the victory over the demagogic parties. I cannot refrain here from mentioning an interesting meeting with Thiers, because I believe that, owing to my position in the matter being of no moment, this statesman, with whom I had then been acquainted for thirty years, could express himself with less constraint to me, than he could in strictly official discussions.

In October, Thiers had undertaken his famous tour to the capitals of Europe, for the purpose of obtaining the mediation of the neutral Powers. After this attempt had failed, he came from Tours to Versailles on the 30th of October, in order to proceed to Paris, with the consent of the German Government, and return again with proposals of peace. I spoke with him, when he passed through Versailles in his carriage, and, after his return, he lodged in the Hotel du Reservoir, and was my neighbour. On the 2nd of November, he visited me at 8 o'clock in the morning, and we had a long conversation, the chief points of which I at once noted down.

Thiers declared the chief result of his negotiations with the neutral Powers to be the necessity of soon attaining peace. He had come from Tours, in order to propose to the Parisian Government, at the express request of the neutrals, that it should enter into a truce with the German army. This truce was necessary to enable the elections for the constituencies to take place, and for this purpose at least five and twenty days were required.

Upon my asking what we had to expect from these elections, Thiers assured me that they would undoubtedly result in favour of the conservatives, and be a demonstration of the party of peace. He assumed that the Assembly would immediately rid itself of the passionate elements in the present Government, and that a new Government would consider it to be its chief task to establish peace.

I remarked that the truce would only be used to organise

and increase a useless resistance, whereupon Thiers proceeded to give an excellent description of the men who held the destiny of France in their hands. He characterised Gambetta at once as an utterly crazy personage, and said that to render him harmless was in itself worth the efforts of all parties. In his condemnation of Gambetta and his foolhardy game, he went so far as to accuse him of consciously working at the subversion of all social order in France. On the other hand, he described the members of the Parisian Government as thoroughly reasonable and moderate men. He had been able to arrive at an understanding with them at a single sitting, and he would not allow it to be doubted, that, if the truce were once concluded, peace would definitely follow. I asked upon what conditions they expected the truce in Paris, whereupon Thiers declared that they would be obliged to demand the provisioning of Paris for five and twenty days, because the elections for the new constituencies could not be accomplished sooner.

When I observed, that I scarcely thought the German leaders would agree to such a condition, he answered with great emotion, that in that case the position of the Parisians would grow considerably worse. He then launched into a description of the *élan* which he had found in Paris, and which rendered it impossible to keep the population quiet, unless it were permitted to obtain provisions during the truce. The stirring up of the lower classes of the people was in itself a real danger. Besides, owing to the system of lies which prevailed in the capital, everything had got beyond control. It was only through him that the capitulation of Metz with its conditions had been learned there, whereupon all Paris had been thrown into a state of commotion. The streets had filled with people, and his person had been seriously threatened. The members of the Government had not dared to accompany him to the out-posts, and it had been found necessary to give him a strong escort of cavalry on the way.

Notwithstanding Thiers' eloquence, I could only reiterate my doubts as to the proposals he indicated being agreed to at head-quarters. I thought it more likely, I told him, that the

King and Count Bismarck would be inclined to enter into negotiations for definite peace.

He thereupon rejoined, that the strength of the Paris fortifications should not be underrated. In fact, they had quite recently been considerably extended. The war-like spirit of the population was steadily on the increase; the store of provisions was very considerable, and would last still for a long time; whereas our troops, he remarked, would suffer from the cold, and be decimated by disease.

When I asked him what he thought of the future prospects of France, he said that he was unable to form an idea of them. He only knew one thing, that the Napoleons had made themselves impossible in the country, and that they really had no party. In reference to his own person, the aged statesman expressed himself very resigned. If the negotiations failed, he said, he would retire to the South and live in the country. In that case, his house in Paris would no doubt be plundered and demolished. But he was afraid that a similar fate awaited all proprietors and respectable people.

I need scarcely recall the fact, that, in spite of the friendly attitude of the German Government and the leaders of the army, Thiers' attempts at mediation proved unsuccessful.

In Versailles, meanwhile, we found leisure to devote more attention to the inner questions of the German Empire. That, after the great efforts and victories of the German armies, the unity of all German races and countries, ought to be maintained as a permanent political result of the war, on this point all parties were agreed. To further this great aim, the attainment of which, owing to the King of Prussia's way of thinking, on the one hand, and that of the King of Bavaria, on the other hand, was not yet quite assured, was a duty which, in my humble opinion, we Federal Sovereigns had to fulfil, without taking too much account of special regulations and proceedings in the negotiations, either with Bavaria, Hesse, or Würtemberg. At any rate, this could be no business of mine.

The Grand-Dukes of Baden and Weimar, in particular, felt themselves at one with the Crown Prince in promoting

these ends, and, after the position of affairs had once been recognised, the chief thing was to induce the King of Bavaria to take such steps as would determine King William to agree to our views, and more especially to the acceptance of the Imperial dignity.

However, although the world-famous letter of the King of Bavaria to King William was at last signed on the 30th of November, it was not until the 17th of January that the King announced his assumption of the Imperial title to the assembled Sovereigns with the words: 'I accept the German Imperial dignity, not with the view to asserting those pretensions to power, for the realisation of which, in the most glorious periods of our history, the might of Germany was put to the stake to the detriment of her inner development, but with the firm resolution, so far as God gives me grace, to be as a German Sovereign the faithful protector of all rights, and to wield the sword of Germany in Germany's defence.'

Thus, in the Galérie des Glaces in the Palace of Versailles, the 18th of January became a true coronation-festival, and a feast of reconciliation between the sovereigns and races of Germany. As for myself, the Emperor accorded me a satisfaction on that day, which I have esteemed so highly throughout the rest of my life, that, in writing my Memoirs, I have placed his kind and indulgent words at the commencement of my work, considering them, as it were, the seal of all my aims, endeavours, and actions.

The assurance which the Emperor then gave me, that, amid the successes of that day, he was reminded of my long activity, has since appeared to me to be the best reason for attempting to narrate my experiences. That I have been able to conclude them, after the German Empire, which I had longed for from my earliest years, has become a truth and a reality by virtue of free and irrevocable treaties, is a source of happiness to me indeed.

The Empire, of which the Emperor William said in his proclamation to the German nation, that he would be its augmenter, 'not in warlike conquests, but in works of peace, on the field of national welfare, liberty, and civilisation,' was

founded in the bloody struggles of a most righteous defensive war.

Two decades of its existence bear witness that these Imperial words were true, and that, under the protection of the new Empire, a period of unknown prosperity and astonishing working power has set in.

This end has been attained by a diplomacy of peace, which has contrived to master the most difficult tasks, and to solve problems which appeared almost insoluble. It has been attained by the prudence and steadfastness of the man who, as the faithful interpreter of the Imperial will, has led us hitherto, and whose rule has so fortunately been preserved to us for a long series of years.

This success is in the first instance owing to the carefully cherished friendly relations to Prussia's old allies. The new Empire has contrived to restore the old tie which unites Germany and Austria. It has developed a community of interests between the nations of Central Europe, the consciousness of which has been strong enough to overcome petty difficulties for the sake of general peace, and it can afford to bear the provocations of hatred, and the hostility of unruly neighbours and national chimeras, with the equanimity and calmness of the powerful.

The victorious Emperor saw the anniversary of the capitulation of Paris return no less than seventeen times, and, during this period, the union between sovereigns and races grew closer and more faithful. If parties who stood aloof, still dared to reckon with the gravest crimes of murder and treason, this was only calculated to increase the attachment and self-abnegation of the German nation. It seemed, indeed, as if its aged head stood under the special protection of Providence.

At the coffin of the Emperor William, the German nation mourned in common with its sovereigns, who now felt themselves more united than ever. Nor could the most fearful tragedy in the Imperial house cause the slightest shock to the well-built edifice. Indeed, when Providence ordained that a noble, gifted, and patriotic Hohenzollern should not live to attain his lofty ends, it seemed as if it were thereby to be

proved to the world, what severe blows of fate the new Empire was capable of sustaining.

The accession to the Government of the grandson of the Emperor William I succeeded in transforming the deepest sorrow into glad confidence, and we preserve a brilliant recollection of the solemn moment at the opening of the Reichstag, when all the German sovereigns gathered enthusiastically round their Kaiser, to represent in a body, as it were, the fulness of the power and the sovereign unity of the German Empire.

I have to acknowledge it gratefully as a great divine grace, that I myself, who am now one of the oldest among the sovereigns, have been able to take part in these saddest and most exalted moments in our recent existence, with the same freshness as of yore, when all was still conflict and suspense, and that it has been vouchsafed me to live to see the conflicting tendencies, of which my Memoirs are to relate to the reader, dispelled, destroyed, and buried.

The complete inward change that has come over the German, who now holds intercourse with all great nations, and stands at the helm of the ship which cuts boldly through the ocean flood, can only be conceived, if we count and ponder on the long series of years in which this change has been wrought.

May the following generations of our nation never fall into the error of supposing that these acquisitions were merely a gift, or easily obtained. He who becomes absorbed in the history of the times in which we acquired what we possess by dint of hard struggles and counter-struggles, however differently he may think of the details, will gain the impression that it is only by struggles, sacrifices, and patriotism, that the national possessions can be maintained.

I may trust, perhaps, that my descriptions of this epoch will be calculated to work in the sense in which I myself prefer to look back upon the chief moments of my life: Whatsoever path the wanderer may pursue, deceptions and mistakes will not be spared him. But there is one thing which covers many foibles and defects with the mantle of peace: an honest consciousness of unerring patriotism.

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